A Short History of the National Democratic Movement in South Africa

Jan Hofmeyr

Front cover: “Blacks and Whites in line at polls, voting.” Photographer: William Campbell.
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Dedicated to

… my political friends and everyone who calls the continent of Africa their home …

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Foreword

South Africans are good at democracy. Elections are on time, every time. People line up on the appointed day, wait patiently, vote – and get on with their lives. The results have never been challenged. As Pierre Cronje (one of the founders of the **National Democratic Movement**) says, "it is such an elegant solution to the problem of choosing leaders – you put your mark on a piece of paper and go home." If White men had extended the franchise to everyone in 1910, we would have found out that we are good at democracy a lot sooner than we did. That doesn't mean that we choose well. But then, that's the point of a democracy: every five years (or so) you can "throw the bums out" (as the saying goes).

The title of this book is accurate but could be misleading. So it's important to say what the book is not about: it is not a history of the process that took South Africa from a country governed by European settlers and their descendants to a non-racial democracy. Instead, it's a short history of a movement: the **National Democratic Movement** (English) or **Nasionale Demokratiese Beweging** (Afrikaans); and the role that it played in South Africa's transformation. A lot has been written about the period by others (Odendaal, Maharaj, Jordan, Rosenthal – see "Sources"). This book fills in the NDM part of the story.

The NDM was founded by Wynand Malan and some dissident White politicians in 1987. Malan had been a member of parliament for the governing **National Party**. In 1987, he and a group of high-profile NP supporters broke away to contest the White elections as independents on an anti-apartheid platform. They achieved stunning results in an environment which had become very difficult for White anti-apartheid parties. Later that year they were joined by **Progressive Federal Party** dissidents Peter Gastrow, Pierre Cronje, and Pieter Schoeman. The two sets of defections – from the governing NP and the liberal PFP – tell you something about the political logjam that South Africa was in at the time.

This is their story. To set the scene, I've started in 1910. I've ended in 1990 with de Klerk's speech. Some might say – why 1910? Read on. Others might say "but a lot happened after 1990." Read on.

Now – some notes about the approach I've adopted for the book.

First, this is not an academic book in the manner of footnotes and references for every statement. I wanted to keep the book short and readable. But it is well researched. There are sources for everything. You'll find a list of sources at the back. When I researched the book, I discovered that there are many minor variations in authoritative sources around specific dates (for events, for instance); or numbers of people killed (for instance). You might therefore find dates and numbers that differ from mine. But you'll find that the variations are small.

Second, I tried to keep it short by focusing on the content that I thought the reader should know for the NDM's story. This means that the book does not dive into complex details of every

aspect of South Africa's history. Important events are untold, for instance, the 1914 Afrikaner rebellion. Also missing is the story of simmering Afrikaner resentment against the British. At its core, the National Party was anti-British. You can see this from how it emerged as a result of break-aways during the World Wars and the Great Depression.

Third, names and terminology: I've adopted Johns's (1987) convention of calling people and groups what they called themselves at the time. This is why the descriptor "non-European" appears in the early chapters. In fact, in one of the early meetings of the **African National Congress**, a member of the ANC proposed that the organization should switch from the terms "European" and "non-European" to "African" and "non-African." The organization didn't consider it seriously at the time.

Fourth, the term "Black territories." At the heart of South Africa's apartheid policies was the attempt to restrict Black land ownership to a small part of South Africa. The National Party called these "homelands." It was a euphemism designed to make the policy sound acceptable. The ANC called them "Bantustans." It was a pejorative name aimed at denigrating them. I've decided to use the words "Black territories."

Fifth, acronyms! There's the African National Congress (ANC), the National Party (NP), the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU), the Gesuiwerde Nasionale Party (GNP), the Herstigte Nasionale Party (HNP), the Progressive Reform Party (PRP) – and on and on. There are a great many names because organizations kept appearing and disappearing and renaming themselves. The use of acronyms to shorten the text made the text very difficult to follow. But writing out the names in full made the text slow and clumsy. So I've adopted the editorially inconsistent practice of sometimes writing a name in full; and sometimes using the acronym. To make things easier, I've put a glossary of acronyms at the start of every chapter.

Sixth, I've made substantial use of quotes from source documents. This is a) because it ensures accuracy when representing a person or organization; b) because I need them for commentary; and c) because nothing captures what people were thinking better than the words they actually used. For the sake of brevity, I've sometimes shortened the quotes by cutting out words that weren't needed. I haven't used the convention of "…" to flag this every time because it breaks the flow. But the meaning of the originals is faithfully rendered.

Finally, spelling and **bold text**: I've adopted a mix of British and Canadian spelling – whichever words feel easiest on the eye. And the **bold text** is a stylistic device, including in quoted sources where **bold** is mine, not the original's.

Some may feel that the book ends abruptly. That's because de Klerk's speech brought fundamental changes to what each of us in the NDM was doing. Even so, it is complete. We stayed socially and politically involved in different ways.

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A Timeline of Important Dates

This isn't every date. It's only key dates that give one a sense of how this history flowed. It includes dates for key bits of apartheid and security legislation.

Dates for the period: 1893 to 1948

1893 24 May: Gandhi landed in South Africa. He developed **satyagraha** (forceful, peaceful non-compliance with laws). Until the 1960s, it was the foundation of Black resistance to injustice.

1908 12 October: the **Convention on the Closer Union of South Africa** met for the first time to draft a constitution. All the delegates were White men.

22 October: "aboriginal natives of South Africa resident in the Transvaal" submitted a petition arguing for the adoption of the Cape's non-racial qualified franchise in the new constitution.

1909 20 September: the British government passed the **South Africa Act** into law. The four provinces retained their franchises, but parliament was restricted to White men over 21 years old.

1910 15 September: the first election in the **Union of South Africa**. Louis Botha's **South African Party** won an outright majority with just 28% of the vote in the first-past-the-post system.

1911 28 April: the **Mines and Works Act** became law. It was the first of a series of laws that reserved skilled and semi-skilled jobs for White South Africans. Collectively known as job reservation.

1912 8 January: the South African Native National Congress was founded with John Dube as its first president. In 1923 it changed its name to the **African National Congress**.

1913 12 June: the **Natives Act** became law. It restricted Black South Africans' right to own land to just 7% of South Africa. Blacks made up about 67% of the population.

1914 24 June: a delegation from the SANNC met in London with Lewis Harcourt (the Secretary for the Colonies) to petition against the Natives Act. Their petition failed.

1 July: J.B.M. Hertzog left Botha's government to found the **National Party**. He opposed South Africa's entry into WW 1 on the side of the British. As a colony, South Africa had no choice.

1915 20 October: second Union election. Hertzog's National Party won 30% of the vote. Botha's South African Party failed to win a majority but governed with the support of the English Unionist Party.

1918 2 August: the executive of the South African Native National Congress approved its draft constitution. Congress ratified the constitution in September 1919.

1919 21 November: an SANNC delegation led by Sol Plaatje met with the British Prime Minister, Lloyd George, to petition for justice after loyal service in the war. They got nothing.

19 December: the non-racial **Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union** organized the dock workers strike in Cape Town. By the mid-1920s, the ICU was the biggest union in South Africa.

The 1910s saw waves of strikes and pass law protests. Most were brutally put down by the State and, in the case of mine strikes, by private mine-security. Very few led to gains for workers.

1920 27 February: Black miners went on strike. The strike lasted 12 days and involved 70,000 workers. It was put down with brutal force and led to no gains for the workers.

10 March: third Union election. The National Party won more seats than the South African Party. Smuts formed a coalition with the Unionists to stay in power. Later that year they merged.

1921 30 July-1 August: the **Communist Party of South Africa** (later the SACP) was founded. In 1924, the SACP became the first political party in South Africa to recruit members of all races.

28 December: the **Rand Rebellion** started. It was a militant movement of White workers to protest the employment of Blacks. Ruthlessly put down by Smuts with the help of the army.

1923 14 June: the **Natives Urban Areas Act** passed into law. Part of the edifice of pass laws. Based on the idea that "Natives" should only be allowed into White areas if Whites wanted them there.

1924 17 June: fourth Union election. Won by a coalition of Afrikaner nationalists (Hertzog's National Party); and English socialists (Creswell's Labour Party).

1925 13 November: Hertzog gave a landmark speech in Smithfield, outlining his solution to the "Native problem." It involved establishing tribal territories and limited Black self-government.

1927 30 September: the **Immorality Act** became law. It prohibited Whites and Blacks from "carnal intercourse." Whites could still marry other race groups.

1930 21 May: the **Women's Enfranchisement Act** gave White women over the age of 21 the vote. White women voted for the first time in the 1933 Union election.

1933 17 May: sixth Union election. Won by a coalition of Hertzog's National Party and Smuts' South African Party. In 1934 the two merged to form the **United Party**.

1934 July (no date recorded): led by D.F. Malan, 19 members of Hertzog's caucus broke away to protest the formation of the United Party. They called themselves the Gesuiwerde (Purified) Nationalists.

1936 7 April: **Representation of Natives Act** became law. Put Hertzog's 1925 ideas into practice and established a Natives' Representative Council. Removed Black voters from the Cape voters' roll.

1937 21 June: first election for the Natives' Representative Council. Among those elected were three members of the ANC.

1938 18 May: seventh Union election. Won by the United Party led by Hertzog. In a sign of things to come, D.F. Malan's "Gesuiwerde" Nationalists got 31.3% of the vote.

A series of wildcat strikes during WW 2 led to significant gains for Black workers because the White establishment needed to keep industry going during the war. Black urbanization and unionization increased significantly.

1943 3 August: Black commuters living in Alexandra started bus boycotts to protest an increase in bus fares. For ten days they walked 9 miles to and from work. They included a young Mandela.

1944 10 September: founding of the **ANC Youth League** at a meeting in the Bantu Social Centre in Johannesburg. Anton Lembede was elected as the first president.

1946 May (in the second week): the ANCYL published Lembede's landmark article calling for **Freedom in our Time**.

1947 8-9 May: the NRC met with South Africa's prime minister, Jan Smuts, to demand the repeal of all discriminatory legislation. Smuts proposed a range of reforms which they rejected out-of-hand.

12 August: Black mine workers hit South Africa with the biggest strike in its history. But the war was over. The strike was brutally suppressed. More than 1,000 workers were seriously injured.

14 August: following the government's response to the strike, the Natives' Representative Council passed a motion to suspend its activity indefinitely.

Dates for the period: 1948 to 1980

1948 26 May: ninth Union election. Due to the first-past-the-post system, the Herenigde Nationalists in coalition with the Afrikaner Party won a majority of the seats with just 42% of the vote.

1949 15 December: the first day of the ANC congress at which delegates elected a new, more activist leadership including Youth League leaders Walter Sisulu and Oliver Tambo.

17 December: the ANC adopted a **Programme of Action** drafted by its Univ. of Fort Hare representatives, Robert Sobukwe and Godfrey Pitje.

1950 26 June: the ANC organized a work stayaway in accordance with the Programme of Action. According to estimates, 80% of the workers in and around Johannesburg stayed away from work.

7 July: the **Group Areas Act** became law. It created racially defined living areas for all the races. It led to mass forced removals of non-White South Africans from areas zoned for Whites.

17 July: the government enacted the **Suppression of Communism Act** in response to the stayaway. The Act defined **all anti-apartheid activity** as communist.

1951 17 July: the **Bantu Authorities Act** established what it called "homelands" as territories where Black South Africans could have a limited form of self-government.

1952 26 June: the start of the ANC's **Defiance Campaign**. It aimed to bring down the economy and make South Africa ungovernable through peaceful mass defiance of all apartheid laws.

1953 13 March: in response to the Defiance Campaign, the government passed the **Criminal Law Amendment Act**. Protesting peacefully against apartheid became a crime.

April (no specific date): President Albert Luthuli of the ANC called off the Defiance Campaign saying that it had done too much harm to protesters. He called for a review of strategy.

9 October: both the **Bantu Education** and the **Reservation of Separate Amenities Acts** became law. The first created a framework for Black education that led to a culturally biased, inferior education. The second enforced racial segregation in all public amenities, even queues.

1954 1 August: the **Native Resettlement Act** became law. It provided for the forced removal of Blacks from areas designated for Whites, even if Blacks held title to the land.

1955 26 June: in Kliptown near Johannesburg, some 3,000 delegates to a congress called by the ANC adopted the **Freedom Charter** as the blueprint for a non-racial constitution.

1956 16 March: the **Riotous Assemblies Act** became law. It allowed the Minister of Justice to ban any meeting that, in his view, might lead to a "disturbance of the peace."

5 December: the government charged 156 members of the ANC with treason for supporting the Freedom Charter. The last of the defendants in the **Treason Trial** was found **not guilty** in 1961.

1959 6 April: Robert Sobukwe led a break-away from the ANC and established the **Pan Africanist Congress**. The PAC was an African socialist, democratic, and anti-communist organization.

1960 21 March: the PAC initiated what it called the "Status campaign," that is, a mass peaceful protest against the pass laws under the slogan "no bail, no defence, no fine."

The **Sharpeville massacre** occurred on 21 March. Police opened fire on peaceful PAC protesters, killing 69 people. There was international outrage at the massacre.

27 March: Oliver Tambo went into exile to set up an ANC infrastructure outside South Africa. He eventually settled in London where he remained in exile for 30 years.

4 May: Robert Sobukwe was sentenced to three years in prison for inciting protest. As his term ended in 1963, he was sentenced again, this time to solitary confinement on Robben Island.

The government's response to the PAC's Status campaign persuaded both the ANC and the PAC that they had to resort to an armed struggle. The ANC's armed wing, uMkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the

Nation) stuck determinedly to a policy of not targeting civilians. It bombed power lines and empty government buildings. The PAC's armed wing, Poqo (Pure) was more indiscriminate. It included White civilians in its attack, most famously in Paarl outside Cape Town in 1962.

1963 11 July: the police raided a farm called Liliesleaf. It turned out to be the HQ for uMkhonto we Sizwe. Key leaders of the ANC were arrested. Mandela was already in custody.

3 December: the start of the **Rivonia trial** of ANC activists accused of 193 acts of sabotage. On 12 June 1964, the guilty were sentenced to life imprisonment and sent to Robben Island.

1966 30 September: the first cracks appeared in rigid Afrikaner nationalism. An academic called Willem de Klerk coined the descriptions "verlig" (progressive) and "verkramp" (conservative) to describe two types of Afrikaners. He was critical of the verkramptes.

1967 21 June: the **Terrorism Act** became law. It gave any policeman with a rank of Lieutenant Colonel or higher the power to detain suspects indefinitely without trial and without judicial oversight.

1968 The **African Students' Movement** emerged as a result of high school activism in Soweto. It became the **South African Students' Movement** in January 1972.

In December, Steve Biko and others founded the **South African Students' Organization** for university students. Biko became president at a conference at the Univ. of the North in July 1969.

1972 8-10 July: founding of the **Black People's Convention** at a conference in Edendale near Pietermaritzburg. In outlook it was closer to Sobukwe's Africanism than the Freedom Charter.

Wildcat strikes hit South Africa yet again in 1973. By this time, working conditions for Black workers were so poor in many companies that the strikers had the sympathy of both the public and the government. The strikes led eventually to labour reforms that legalized Black trade unionism in 1979.

Steve Biko was banned in 1973; and in 1974, 200 BPC activists were arrested and sent to Robben Island when they rallied in support of the independence of Mozambique.

1976 16 June: the start of the **Soweto Uprising** to protest the use of Afrikaans to teach Black school pupils. Estimates of the number of pupils killed on the first day range from 23 to 150.

The government responded to the riots by banning the Black People's Convention. Biko was arrested on 18 August 1977 and killed by violent interrogation.

1977 29 July: the **Community Councils Act** became law. In an important departure from hardline apartheid, it provided for elected councils in Black urban areas near White cities.

30 November: fifteenth Union election. The peak of **National Party** power. It won 134 seats in the 165-seat assembly. The Progressive Federal Party became the official opposition with just 17% of the vote. The verligte Wynand Malan was elected to parliament in Randburg.

1978 28 September: P.W. Botha replaced B.J. Vorster as the leader of the National Party after what's known as the Information Scandal.

By 1979 there were significant signs of strategic and ideological change in both the ANC and the Afrikaner establishment. The ANC published a new strategy in the **Green Book** based on Vietnamese revolutionary ideas. Willie Esterhuyse, a philosophy professor at the Univ. of Stellenbosch, published a book of essays called Farewell to apartheid (later renamed apartheid is Dead).

Dates for the decade of the 1980s

1980 1 June: successful ANC attack on Sasolburg oil refinery. Spectacular fires. The O'Malley archive lists 17 acts of sabotage for the year.

13 June: Security Council Resolution 473 condemned South Africa's apartheid repression. Called for the release of political prisoners and the elimination of apartheid. Adopted unanimously.

1981 30 January: the South African Defence Force raided Matola, an ANC base in Mozambique. Two SADF soldiers were killed. 12 ANC operatives were killed.

29 April: sixteenth Union election. NDM founders Pierre Cronje and Peter Gastrow were elected to parliament for the PFP. A conservative break-away from Botha's Nationalists made big gains.

1982 8 January: at a ceremony to mark the ANC's 70th anniversary, Oliver Tambo announced that 1982 would be a year of mass mobilization on multiple fronts (per the ANC's Green Book).

31 March: Mandela and others were moved from Robben Island to Pollsmoor prison. The move was the first step to creating a setting in which talks with Mandela could begin.

SA security force activity continued through the year: ANC offices were bombed in London (14 March); Ruth First was killed by a parcel bomb in Mozambique (17 August); 42 ANC operatives were killed in an SADF raid in Lesotho (9 December).

1983 20 May: a car bomb exploded outside South Africa's air-force HQ in Pretoria, killing 17 and injuring 200. The ANC claimed responsibility. The ANC said it was a legitimate military target.

23 May: the SADF conducted a bombing raid on ANC targets in Mozambique. 6 killed. More raids on 17 October. The O'Malley archive reports 42 people killed in the raids.

20 August: founding of the **United Democratic Front** in Mitchell's Plain outside Cape Town. Formed to oppose Botha's proposed constitutional reforms.

22 September: the **South Africa Constitution Act** became law. It established democratically elected but racially separate parliaments for Coloureds, Indians, and Whites.

In 1983, the secretive Afrikaner cultural and political organization, the Broederbond (Brotherhood), started to circulate what were, for the time, radical discussion documents about reform. Its chairperson met in secret with the ANC's Thabo Mbeki in New York in 1985.

1984 6 January: Security Council Resolution 546 demanded that South Africa withdraw from Angola. France supported the resolution. The USA and the UK abstained.

8 January: in its annual statement, the ANC called for a **People's War** based on mass mobilization (protests, strikes), underground military activity, and international isolation.

17 August: the UN Security Council passed Resolution 554 **condemning** the new **Tricameral Constitution**. France voted for condemnation. The UK and the USA abstained.

22 August: first elections for the Houses of Representatives (Coloureds) and Delegates (Indians). The **low turnout** (18% and 23% respectively) called the legitimacy of the Houses into question.

3 September: protests against the new democratically elected Black urban councils became very violent. Starting in the Vaal triangle, they rapidly spread across the country. Protestors targeted Black people who were participating in government structures, calling them "sell-outs."

6 October: in a city called Grahamstown, the South African government used the army for the first time to put down Black protests. The army continued to maintain a military presence in Black towns until de Klerk lifted the second state of emergency in 1990.

The government started to allow visitors to Nelson Mandela in 1984. 1984 was also the first year in which academic H.W. van der Merwe tried to organize meetings between establishment Afrikaners and the ANC. Wynand Malan accepted the first invitation, but P.W. Botha quashed the initiative.

1985 25 January: P.W. Botha opened parliament by announcing that he would release Nelson Mandela as long as Mandela renounced the armed struggle. Mandela rejected the offer. Botha noted that influx control and the pass law edifice had failed.

21 March: the Uitenhage massacre. Police killed between 20 and 35 protesters who had organized a peaceful march to commemorate the Sharpeville massacre.

29 March: Botha banned the UDF and other anti-apartheid organizations from holding meetings in 18 magisterial districts.

20 July: Botha declared a state of emergency in 36 magisterial districts. The state of emergency gave the police extensive powers and suspended normal law.

15 August: the **Rubicon** speech. This was Botha's manifesto. He told the world that repression would continue while he attempted to construct a race-based democracy in South Africa.

The speech recognized that apartheid's grand plan to restrict Black South Africans to tribal territories had failed. But Botha remained committed to group "protections" through laws like the Group Areas Act. The speech was widely condemned for maintaining apartheid.

22 August: the UDF organized a peaceful march to Pollsmoor prison to demand an end to apartheid and the release of political prisoners. It was violently repressed. Botha extended the state of emergency to the Cape.

30 August: first day of the Progressive Federal Party's annual congress. Its leader, van Zyl Slabbert, proposed an aggressive strategy to build a non-racial power base.

Anti-apartheid organizations opposed the PFP on the basis that democratic organization was a sham for as long as the ANC and other organizations were banned. Slabbert's initiative failed.

13 September: Gavin Relly, the CEO of Anglo-American mining led a delegation of seven White business leaders and journalists to a meeting with the ANC in Zambia.

13 October: a PFP delegation led by Slabbert met with the ANC in Lusaka. The ANC delegation was led by Alfred Nzo and included the future South African president, Thabo Mbeki.

1 December: founding of the **Congress of South African Trade Unions**. It was the biggest union organization in South Africa's history and would play a key role in the ongoing struggle.

1986 7 February: Van Zyl Slabbert resigned as leader of the PFP and from parliament saying that he was no longer prepared to participate in this "grotesque ritual of irrelevance."

15-17 April: a delegation of Catholic Bishops met with the ANC in Lusaka. It was a one-sided affair in which the ANC instructed the Bishops on how to participate in the struggle.

12 June: after briefly lifting it, Botha imposed a national state of emergency. It led to government by the State Security Council or, more narrowly, South Africa's security management system.

24 June: Botha **repealed** the Influx Control Act which had been the foundation of the pass laws. It was a radical reform. It illustrates how he tried to combine reform with repression.

2 October: the United States enacted the **Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act**. The Act imposed a severe range of import and export bans on South Africa. Many U.S. companies divested.

1987 21 January: Wynand Malan resigned from the National Party. By the weekend he'd decided to stand against the National Party as an independent in the forthcoming elections.

26 January: the PFP announced that it would not stand against Malan. Malan had hoped for opposition from the PFP because he wanted to quantify support for his independent position.

31 January: South Africa's high-profile ambassador to the UK, Denis Worrall, resigned. He returned to South Africa to stand as an independent against the NP's Chris Heunis in Helderberg.

8 February: in his first speech in parliament as an independent, Malan criticized the NP for its inability to let go of apartheid; and the PFP for its incoherence when it came to security.

23 February: the Cape Times reported that several high-profile members of the NP in Stellenbosch had resigned. They selected Esther Lategan to stand as an independent.

21 March: Bishop Tutu met with the ANC in Lusaka. He was highly critical of violence like necklacing, saying that "evil means" should not be used to serve a just cause.

6 May: seventeenth and last Union election. Botha's NP won on a platform of repression and reform. The election was a disaster for the PFP but a triumph for the independents.

9-12 July: 61 influential Afrikaners met with an ANC delegation led by Thabo Mbeki in Dakar, Senegal. The meeting was organized by the Institute for a Democratic Alternative in South Africa – a non-profit founded by Slabbert after resigning from the PFP.

8 October: founding of the National Democratic Movement by independents (Wynand Malan, Adv. "Lang Dawid" de Villiers, and Esther Lategan); and dissident members of the PFP (Peter Gastrow, Pierre Cronje, and Pieter Schoeman).

1 November: the first of a series of secret talks in the UK between inner-circle Afrikaners led by Willie Esterhuyse of Stellenbosch; and an ANC delegation led, for the first talks, by Aziz Pahad.

The NDM devoted the first months of 1988 to organizing and preparing documents that explained its "process politics" approach. It aimed to break through the deadlock between anti-apartheid forces that boycotted all establishment structures; and the forces of the "system" which participated in apartheid structures. Its purpose was to act as a catalyst for transformation that included all South Africans.

1988 24 February: second round of talks between the Esterhuyse group (including Economics professor and NDM member Sampie Terreblanche from the Univ. of Stellenbosch) and the ANC. Thabo Mbeki led the ANC delegation. Its other members were Tony Trew and Aziz Pahad.

On the same day, Botha banned the UDF and sixteen other organizations. The banning orders severely restricted the freedom of movement of leaders like the UDF's Archie Gumede. Anti-apartheid forces simply renamed themselves the **Mass Democratic Movement**.

9 March: the NDM held a public rally in the Cape Town City Hall. I was a member of the PFP. I joined the NDM and got permission from the NDM to stay a member of both. I was invited to join the leadership group on 16 May. The PFP expelled me.

26 May: Slabbert and an NDM delegation met with the ANC in Frankfurt. NDM = Malan, Lategan, Cronje, Hofmeyr, Pakendorf. Along with Aziz Pahad and Tony Seedat, the ANC delegation included two future presidents: Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma.

Also in May: on instructions from P.W. Botha, a team of government functionaries led by the Director of National Intelligence, Niel Barnard, started a series of secret meetings with Nelson Mandela.

12 August: third Mbeki/Esterhuyse talks. Afrikaners = Esterhuyse, Terreblanche, and Willem de Klerk. ANC = Mbeki, Trew, and Aziz Pahad.

In October, the PFP and the NDM reached a formal agreement not to oppose each other in the upcoming local elections.

26 October: local elections throughout South Africa. Largely boycotted by Blacks, Coloureds, and Indians. A PFP/Worrall Independent Party/NDM coalition achieved notable successes in Pretoria and Durban. The NP beat a "go-it-alone" PFP to win in Johannesburg for the first time in history.

2 December: fourth Mbeki/Esterhuyse talks. Notable because, even though the talks were going well, Mbeki expressed impatience because he wanted to talk to people with real power.

14 December: at a meeting in Johannesburg chaired by Willem de Klerk, the PFP, Worrall's IP, and the NDM agreed the basis for a merger.

1989 18 January: P.W. Botha had a mild stroke. On 2 February, F.W. de Klerk was elected to lead the National Party ahead of the security establishment's first choice, Barend du Plessis.

8 April: we launched the Democratic Party based on the NDM's two-prong strategy: participate in apartheid structures and work with "struggle" partners to transform South Africa.

21-24 April: fifth Mbeki/Esterhuyse meeting. Willem de Klerk said that his brother, F.W. de Klerk, was opposed to government by the security management system, but that he'd probably continue a process of gradual transformation.

31 May: after being asked to do so by the NIS, Esterhuyse met in secret with Mbeki in London to establish a protocol for an eventual meeting between the ANC and the NIS.

22-24 June: a DP delegation led by Wynand Malan flew to Lusaka and then Luanda for talks with the ANC. Mbeki asked Malan how the ANC should respond to an approach by "the regime." Malan replied: take the meeting to establish your negotiation credentials, approach it in good faith.

5 July: in a meeting organized by the NIS and without the prior knowledge of his cabinet, Botha finally met with Mandela for the first time at Tuynhuys, the president's Cape Town home.

15 August: the NP ousted Botha as president. De Klerk took over as acting president. At his first cabinet meeting on 16 August, he approved the NIS meeting with the ANC.

20-24 August: O'Malley interviewed Colin Eglin (DP), Sampie Terreblanche (DP) and the ANC. None of them held out much hope for significant change under de Klerk.

6 September: first (and, as it happens, last) Tricameral election. The National Party won, but with less than 50% of the vote. The DP won 33 seats – not the 40 for which they'd hoped.

12 September: the first external contact between "system" and "struggle" power players in Lucerne, Switzerland. NIS = Maritz Spaarwater, Mike Louw. ANC = Thabo Mbeki, Jacob Zuma.

15 October: De Klerk released eight prominent political prisoners including Walter Sisulu (former ANC Secretary-General), Oscar Mpetha (a key UDF leader), and Jafta Masemola (PAC leader).

16 November: De Klerk announced that the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act would be repealed. It had enforced segregation for facilities like hospitals, public transport, park benches.

13 December: De Klerk and Mandela met for the first time in secret at Tuynhuys to discuss South Africa's political future.

1990 2 February: F.W. de Klerk opened parliament with the speech that changed everything. He unbanned all organizations, said that he would release all political prisoners, announced that apartheid would be completely scrapped and that constitutional negotiations would begin.

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A Short History of the National Democratic Movement in South Africa

Jan Hofmeyr

Section 1

A Brief Introduction to Modern South African Political History

Section 1 is a bare-bones history, beginning with the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910; and ending with the Botha reforms in 1980. It is accurate; and its purpose is to establish the flow of South African racial politics into the 1960s, 70s, and 80s.

The backdrop to the history is the pass laws – that is, a package of laws that restricted the right of people who weren't European to move around the country without permission. The earliest of these laws was passed in 1797 by Earl Macartney to prevent Black South Africans from migrating to the Cape Colony. Europeans never faced such restrictions. I mention them here, as a reminder that non-European South Africans faced many discriminatory practices before the Union.

Glossary for Chapter 1: From the Union to the 1948 Election

Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress (1912 to the present – name changed to ANC in 1923).
ANCYL	African National Congress Youth League (1944 to the present).
CP	Communist Party of South Africa, South African Communist Party (1921 to the present).
GNP	Gesuiwerde Nasionale Party (1934-1940). English = Purified National Party.
HNP	Herenigde Nasionale Party (1940-1951). English = Reunited National Party.
ICU	Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (1919 – unravelled in the 1930s).
IWA	Industrial Workers of Africa (1917 – merged into the ICU in 1920).
LP	Labour Party, the original social democratic one (1910-1958).
NIC	Natal Indian Congress (1894 – until it effectively merged into the ANC after 1994).
NP	National Party (1914-1934; 1951-1998).
NRC	Natives' Representative Council (1937-1946).
SAIC	South African Indian Congress (1921 – became dormant in the 1970s).
SANNC	South African Native National Congress (1912, changed its name to the ANC in 1923).
SAP	South African Party (1910-1934).
UP	United Party (1934-1977). Renamed the New Republic Party in 1977.

Coloured: a word that people use to refer to a group who live mostly in the Western Cape. Some are descendants of the original inhabitants of South Africa, the Khoe-San. Some are descendants of slaves imported by the Dutch from the Dutch East Indies. Some came from mixed marriages.

Chapter 1
From the Union to the 1948 Election

In the first decade of the 1900s, Britain wanted to turn its four South African colonies into one country. This chapter is a short history of the resulting country from union in 1910 to the 1948 election of Afrikaner nationalists.

i) 31 May 1910: the Union of South Africa

On 31 May 1910, four British colonies in Southern Africa combined to form the Union of South Africa. Two of them, the Transvaal and Orange River colonies, had been self-proclaimed Boer republics until their defeat in the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902. A third, the Cape, became British in 1806 when it was seized from the Dutch; and Natal (the fourth) had been annexed by Britain in 1843. Delegates from the four met between 12 October 1908 and 11 May 1909 to draft a constitution for the new country. They called their meetings the **Convention on the Closer Union of South Africa**. All the delegates were White men.

Among the many contentious issues, two stood out. The first was the question of whether South Africa should be a federal or unitary state. Both Canada and Australia had adopted federal constitutions – Canada in 1867 and Australia in 1901. But Jan Smuts of the Transvaal argued forcefully that South Africa needed a union. He gave the United States as an example of a federal country that functioned poorly because of its lack of unity. He believed that delegating too much power to the provinces would cause divisions that the new country could not afford. The Cape and Natal delegations objected. But when the Natal delegation put the issue to a vote in Natal, the Union proposal passed, much to their surprise.

The second contentious issue was that of voting rights. This was an age when most democracies had not yet given women the vote. In addition, both the Transvaal and Orange River Colony restricted the vote to White men. Natal had introduced a non-racial qualified franchise based on property and rents in 1856. Over time, however, White settlers had introduced increasingly stringent criteria for qualification. By 1901 an increase in property prices and the addition of educational criteria had set the bar so high that almost no-one who was not a White man qualified.

The Cape had introduced one of the more liberal qualified franchises in the Empire in 1853. Nicknamed "the £25 vote," it allowed any man owning property worth £25 or more to vote. The Cape's franchise included traditional, tribal land. Men without title living on tribal land had the right to vote as a function of the value of the land. It was an unusually low non-racial bar for the era. Over time it had become more restrictive: first, by the removal of the tribal land criterion in 1887; and second, by an increase in the property criterion to £75 and the addition of a literacy test in 1892. These changes led to White men outnumbering others on the voters' roll by about six to one. This was the system that the Cape delegation took to the Convention. They wanted South Africa to have something like the Cape's qualified franchise.

The Cape lost and the Convention proposed a compromise: each colony could keep its franchise in its territory. In practice this meant that only White men over 21 would have the right to vote in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony. Natal retained its highly restrictive qualified franchise: only 200 of the roughly 22,000 eligible voters were not White. The Cape was allowed to keep its qualified franchise. But it lost the right to elect men who were not White to parliament.

The draft passed easily in all four colonies. And so, a delegation went off to London with the draft. It became law when the British passed the South Africa Act on 20 September 1909.

At the time, the makeup of South Africa's population was as follows: Black = about 4 million (67%); White = about 1.3 million (21.5%); Coloured = 0.5 million; Asian = 0.14 million. Nearly 80% of the men in the geographical territory of the new Union of South Africa were denied the vote.

ii) Petitions that argued for Black parliamentary representation

Black political activists had not been silent during the **Convention**. On 22 October 1908, activists from the Transvaal submitted an eloquent argument for the extension of political rights to all South Africans. It was submitted on behalf of the "aboriginal natives of South Africa resident in the Transvaal" (for a copy see Johns, 1987, pp. 52-3):

> *"We, the undersigned, being aboriginal natives of South Africa resident in the Transvaal, beg to bring before your honourable convention our just claim to be granted representation in the Parliament of a United South Africa.*
>
> *"We desire to remind you that the natives in this colony have hitherto been totally unrepresented... notwithstanding the fact that they contribute largely in direct taxation to the treasury, in addition to bearing a full share of the indirect taxation through pass fees, railways, and the Customs tariff.*
>
> *"We attribute the advancement in prosperity and loyalty, which is such a marked characteristic of the natives of the Cape Colony, to the generous policy which has permitted them to qualify themselves as citizens... And we submit that the same happy result may be expected to follow the **extension of the Cape franchise** to our people throughout South Africa.*
>
> *"We therefore submit to the favourable consideration of your honourable convention our claim to be permitted to qualify for **full political privileges** such as may be granted to the European population..."*

All they were asking for was the Cape's qualified franchise. Their petition and others like it were ignored. By the end of the convention, it had become clear that the draft constitution would not extend the qualified franchise beyond the Cape. As a result, activists decided to take the battle to Britain. In July 1909 a multiracial delegation led by William Schreiner, Abdullah Abdurahman, and John Tengo Jabavu petitioned the British Houses of Parliament to argue for amendments that would extend the qualified franchise to all South Africans. Schreiner had been a prime minister of the Cape and Jabavu was a Black activist and founding editor of the African-owned Xhosa newspaper, *Imvo Zabantsundu* (Native Opinion).

Their petition read (in part) as follows (for a copy see Johns, 1987, pp. 55-6):

"Your humble Petitioners are by resolution of five coloured and native congresses, and by resolutions passed at public meetings held at very many different centres in South Africa, empowered to approach the Imperial Parliament by Petition… Those whom your Petitioners represent are loyal and dutiful subjects of His Majesty.

"In the colony of the Cape of Good Hope political rights have been granted to all without discrimination of race or colour… Nowhere has it been suggested that those rights have ever been abused…

"Your humble Petitioners respectfully submit that the only practical means whereby fair legislation can be attained is by granting equal political rights to qualified men irrespective of race, colour, or creed… The Bill now before the Parliament… would by virtue of the phrase 'of European descent' in Clause 44 create a political discrimination against non-European subjects of his majesty…

"Your petitioners fear that the franchise rights of the coloured people and natives of the Cape Colony are not adequately protected… but are indeed threatened by the provisions of Clause 35.

"Your Petitioners apprehend that by the racial discrimination proposed in the aforesaid Bill… the prejudice already existing in the Transvaal, Orange River Colony, and Natal, will be accentuated; that the status of coloured people and natives will be lowered, and that an injustice will be done to the majority of the people in British South Africa who have in the past shown their unswerving loyalty to the Crown…

"Wherefore your Petitioners humbly beseech your Honourable House so to amend aforesaid Bill as to protect the existing rights of His Majesty's coloured and native subjects…"

Clause 44 of the draft constitution limited members of what would be the new parliament to White men. Clause 35 entrenched the rights of the Cape to its qualified franchise – but, in the view of the petitioners, without adequate protections.

The House of Lords debated the South Africa Act on 27 July 1909 (Hansard, Vol. 2). Four quotes convey the flavour of that debate. First up, Lord Northcote (Hansard, Vol. 2, col. 769):

"… what has to be considered is the whole idea underlying… the British Empire… I would ask this House to consider what that idea really is. I say unhesitatingly that, alike in the case of Canada, Australia, and South Africa, it is ***the determination to have white rule and white responsibility for the conduct of public affairs****."*

The second quote comes from Lord Courtney of Penwith who argued against the draft constitution's race-based franchise. He warned of the dangers of a Whites-only government (Hansard, Vol. 2, col. 788):

"If you have only a small proportion of European descent governing a vast mass of coloured population ***you will have a position of unrest, of instability, and of future danger*** *such as would not make South Africa a sound element in your Imperial Union."*

For the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, the mainly Whites-only constitution was morally and practically problematic (Hansard, Vol. 2, col. 783):

"I put it to your Lordships… if you take into account the composition of the population and the proved improvability of the native races, if you take into account the way in which they are raising themselves, ***you see that it will be impossible to maintain the position assumed in this Bill****, and it would have been better at the outset to have allowed this question of eligibility* (that is, of coloured and native South Africans to vote and stand for parliament) *to remain…"*

The final quote comes from the Marquess of Lansdowne who captured the sentiments of the majority (Hansard, Vol. 2, col. 792):

"... we have to ask ourselves with regard to this Bill the simple questions—Is it a good Bill for the Colonies? Is it a good Bill for the Empire? ***I think we may safely answer both those questions in the affirmative..."***

The debate can be summarized in a few sentences. For the majority, it was a trade-off between preserving a fragile peace between Afrikaans- and English-speaking White South Africans, and the rights of the rest of the people. The Lords believed that not giving the former Boer Republics what they wanted would cause the whole process to blow up (they used those words).

For the minority who favoured non-racial political rights of some sort, limiting the vote to White men in most of the country was morally wrong and a strategic mistake. They warned that the country would eventually blow up.

And so, the draft passed into law. Writing in *Imvo Zabantsundu* in August 1909, Jabavu noted that "*The Native and Coloured people must now realize that an entirely new chapter in South African history is opening... they will have to depend on themselves and their... European friends for the securing of their civil and political rights*." (for a copy see Johns, 1987, p. 57)

And as Schreiner and his colleagues warned in London, not even the so-called "entrenched" franchise in the Cape would be safe. Starting in 1936, Union governments steadily whittled away the Cape's non-racial franchise. When changes were challenged in court, the courts ultimately sided with the ruling government's interpretation of the Constitution.

The first general election in the Union of South Africa took place on 15 September 1910. It resulted in a win for a coalition led by the **South African Party** of Louis Botha and Jan Smuts. It won 66 seats, most of them unopposed. The English-speaking **Unionist Party** ended up with 36 seats. A small socialist, mainly English-speaking **Labour Party** came third with 3 seats. Louis Botha became the first prime minister. Modern South Africa had become a political reality.

iii) The South African Native National Congress launches (8 January 1912)

In March 1910 on the eve of the formation of the Union, Black South African leaders met in Bloemfontein to organize a response. They decided to call a convention. In October 1911, Pixley Seme, a lawyer born to a prominent Zulu clan in Natal, wrote a call to action in *Imvo Zabantsundu* (for a copy see Johns, 1987, p. 72):

"There is today among all races and men a general desire for progress, and for cooperation... cooperation is the key which opens the door which leads into progress and national success.

*"The **South African Native Congress** is the voice in the wilderness bidding all the dark races of this sub-continent **to come together once or twice a year** in order to review the past and reject therein all those things which have retarded our progress…*

*"If we wish to convince the Government that it is possible to have a uniform Native policy for the whole of South Africa, then let us form this Congress. **The demon of racialism**, the aberrations of the Xosa-Fingo feud, the animosity that exists between the Zulus and the Tongaas, between the Basutos and every other Native must be buried and forgotten… **These divisions are the cause of all our woes**…*

"The Natives everywhere know that a South African Native Congress such as proposed in these columns, will give them the only effective means whereby they will be able to make their grievances properly known and considered by the Government…

"The Executive committee which is simply a committee elected by a part of the people, is performing the task of organizing this movement. As one of the Committee I am pleased to say that we have been greatly encouraged by the support which we have received from all the great sections of our country.

"This is a general announcement sent to all the Native leaders, Societies and Editors, (advising) *them to arrange for the sending of delegates so that every section of the people shall be represented in that Conference of the races…"*

Seme concluded by suggesting an agenda for the meeting. It was to have two parts. The first would involve establishing the Congress and electing office bearers. The second would consist of deliberations, starting with "a vote of confidence in General the Right Honourable Louis Botha, P.C." There would then be general discussions on such topics as native unity, schools, churches, etc. There is no record of a confidence vote. But the intent is clear: the Congress was to function like a parliament.

The founding meeting took place on 8 January 1912 under the leadership of Seme, John Dube, and Sol Plaatje. We don't know how many people attended. Estimates suggest between 100 and 200. Delegates came from all of Southern Africa including the Protectorates (Bechuanaland/Botswana, Basutoland/Lesotho, Swaziland/Eswatini). They encompassed all walks of life: chiefs, professionals, intellectuals, church leaders, and ordinary workers.

They called the organization the **South African Native National Congress**. From an article that Seme wrote in *Ilanga Lase Natal* ('The Sun of Natal') in March 1912, it's clear that the founders intended the Congress to be a parallel parliament to the Union parliament. "*The South African Native National Congress*" he wrote, "*is in fact a Native Parliament composed of two houses. The Executive Commoners and… the Nobles or Chiefs*." They elected John Dube as its first president. Letsie II, the Paramount Chief of Basutoland, was elected the head of the upper house by acclamation.

The Congress took some time to agree a constitution, partly because World War I intervened. In September 1919, the first constitution was published. (for a copy see Johns, 1987, pp. 76-82). In what follows, I've paraphrased the original but preserved its language. In Chapter 3 they spelled out the objectives of the Congress:

> To **unite** under the aegis of **a deliberative assembly** all organizations whose aims are the promotion of the interests of the aboriginal races; and to be the medium of expression of

representative opinion to educate the (White) Parliament and public regarding the requirements and aspirations of the Native people.

To educate Bantu people on their rights and to bring together all tribes and clans and by means of **united political organization** to defend their rights and to contend against racialism and tribal feuds by economic union, education, and the creation of goodwill.

To **present amendments** to Native legislation. To **agitate against** the 'Colour Bar' and for equitable representation of Natives in Parliament. To seek the redress of grievances by **constitutional means**; and to obtain legal advice for members and render financial (aid) where necessary.

To expound the right system of education in all schools and colleges; and to encourage habits of industry and thrift and the gospel of the dignity of labour. To acquire land for erection of halls and public buildings… to raise money on any part of the property of the Association… and to establish a National Fund for the Association's purposes **by all legal means**…

In Chapter 4 the drafters went on to specify the "*methods or modus operandi*" of the organization (again, paraphrased but using the drafters' words):

The Association will achieve its aims by means of **resolutions**, **protests**, and **deputations**… and by **united and passive action** according to a **constitutional** and **peaceful** agenda. It will educate people about its objectives by means of lectures and literature… and when the time is ripe, it will form a group of members to **secure their election** to all **legislative** and **administrative bodies**…

The constitution spelled out at some length the role that traditional leaders could play. On the one hand it was respectful to "Chiefs" and gave them a voice. But on the other its purpose was to subsume the chiefs within the overarching purposes and structure of the Congress.

iv) Racial legislation in the first decades of the Union

Many British Lords had argued that South Africa would evolve into a non-racial democracy over time. It didn't. Instead, successive Union parliaments took South Africa in a direction modelled on the 1905 report of the British Government's **South African Native Affairs Commission**, chaired by Sir Godfrey Lagden.

The Commission had recommended that South Africa be divided into separate territories for Blacks and Whites. It added that Blacks living in urban areas should be forced to live in segregated locations; and that Black "squatters" living on White-owned farms should be evicted and replaced by wage labourers (though many were living in their traditional homes and found suddenly that their land had been declared to be part of a White farm). Finally, it recommended separate political systems for the two races.

Soon after the election, the Botha government began enacting laws along the lines envisaged in the Native Affairs report:

Native Labour Regulation Act (1911): nominally a law to protect Black workers by, for instance, setting minimum accommodation standards. In effect, however, it was an early building block in

the system to control Black migration to urban areas by regulating the employment of Black workers. Strikes by Black workers became a crime.

Mines and Works Act (1911): reserved skilled and semi-skilled jobs for White workers. Made it very difficult for non-European South Africans to get certificates of competency for a wide range of semi-skilled jobs.

Immigration Regulation Act (1913): made it difficult for Indians to immigrate into South Africa. Stopped Indians from migrating from one province to another.

Native Land Act (1913): limited Black South Africans' right to own or trade land to "scheduled native areas" which were 7% of the country. Blacks were 67% of the population. The Act also made it illegal for Blacks to live as sharecroppers or tenants on White farms. It was a massive act of land dispossession and the effective beginning of territorial segregation in South Africa.

When war broke out in 1914, South Africa was required by colonial law to join the side of the British. This caused a former Boer general and a member of Botha's government, J.B.M. Hertzog to break away and form the **National Party**. In the 1915 election, Afrikaner resentment after the Boer War was still so high that Hertzog won 30% of the vote and 27 seats. Botha's SAP retained a minority 54 seats in what was now a 130-seat parliament. Botha managed to govern with the legislative support of the Unionists.

Jan Smuts became the leader of the SAP when Botha died in 1919. The SAP had continued to lose Afrikaner support in the post-war years. As a result, Hertzog's National Party won 33% of the vote and 43 seats in the 1920 election. Smuts only won 41 seats. The socialist Labour Party went from 3 seats (in 1910) to 21 seats with the support of militant English-speaking workers (it was the era of the Bolshevik revolution). Smuts was only able to govern by forming a formal coalition with the Unionists. Later that year, the Unionists merged into the SAP.

Discrimination marched on:

Native Affairs Act (1920): established advisory boards and councils (called "Bunga") which included chiefs and "prominent natives" to advise the Dept of Native Affairs on policy. Blacks only had advisory powers. Formalised the government of Blacks by the White parliamentary executive.

Apprenticeship Act (1922): prevented non-Europeans from apprenticing for skilled jobs. This further entrenched job-reservation for Whites.

Native Urban Areas Act (1923): aimed to improve living conditions for Black South Africans in urban areas, but made it illegal for them to live outside racially segregated "locations." In 1922 the Stallard report recommended that "Natives" should only be allowed in White urban areas "as long as their presence is demanded by the white population."

Industrial Conciliation Act (1924): passed in response to the Rand Rebellion and the 1921/22 strikes. It created a formal process for resolving labour disputes with White trade unions. But it excluded "workers who were subject to the Pass laws." Blacks, Coloureds and Indians could still form unions, but they had no protections under the Act.

Worker militancy had become violent in 1921/22 when White mineworkers turned out in force to protest the employment of lower-paid Black workers by the so-called "Rand Lords" (European capitalists). With the involvement of organized Marxists, it developed a kind of revolutionary momentum called the Rand Rebellion. Smuts put down the rebellion by force with the help of the army – and lost White working-class support. Hertzog's National Party and the socialist Labour Party took advantage to form an electoral pact for the 1924 election. It was an odd marriage of Afrikaner nationalists with English socialists. They won a huge majority with 81 of 135 seats. They formed what came to be known as the Pact government. The Pact held together and subsequently won the 1929 election. But by that time, Hertzog had consolidated the Afrikaner nationalist vote; and the NP by itself won a 41% vote share.

Under the Pact government, discrimination marched on:

> **Native Administration Act (1927):** put the Governor-General (the British monarch's representative in a colony) and the Dept of Native Affairs in charge of all law in tribal territories. The Governor-General became a kind of "supreme" chief with the power to depose or appoint traditional leaders/chiefs. The Act submitted traditional law (to do with things like marriage, inheritance, land use, etc.) to the administration of the Dept of Native Affairs.
>
> **Immorality Act (1927):** prohibited White and Black South Africans from what it called "carnal intercourse." Whites could still inter-marry with other ethnic minorities.
>
> **Native Service Contract Act (1932):** made it a crime for Black farmworkers to "desert" the farms on which they were working so that they could find better paying jobs somewhere else. It legalized barbaric practices like whipping.

White women got the vote in 1930, but the onset of the Great Depression pitched South Africa into an economic crisis. As a result, Hertzog and Smuts decided to form a governing coalition in 1933. To ratify the coalition, they called an early election. By that time the legislature had increased to 150. The coalition won in a landslide: Hertzog's NP = 75 seats; Smuts's SAP = 61 seats. In 1934 they merged to form the **United Party**. This so angered an Afrikaner nationalist faction that it broke away under D.F. Malan to form the Gesuiwerde Nasionale Party (Purified National Party). The Gesuiwerdes became the main opposition with 19 seats.

Back in 1925 when still in the Pact, Hertzog had given a speech about his solution to the so-called "Native problem." In essence, it simply reiterated a hard-line approach to territorial segregation, but suggested a new structure for Black governance. Those ideas came to fruition when the United Party passed two new laws in 1936:

> **Native Trust and Land Act (1936):** expanded the ownership of Black land to 13.5% of the country, but further entrenched the principle of territorial separation of Blacks and Whites.
>
> **Representation of Natives Act (1936):** created an advisory body of 22 members called the Natives Representative Council. 12 were Blacks elected by male Black taxpayers; 6 were Whites and 4 were Blacks nominated by the Dept of Native Affairs. The Council had no power. It could only advise.

The Act created three parliamentary seats, elected by Blacks. But the representatives had to be White. Blacks were removed from the common voters' roll in the Cape.

The UP also enacted further discrimination against Indians:

Marketing and Land Occupation Act (1937): gave the government sweeping powers to expropriate Indian-owned land in rural areas.

World War II led to another party-political split: Smuts wanted to join the Allies while Hertzog wanted to stay neutral or join the Germans. Hertzog lost the caucus vote, left the United Party, and formed the Volksparty (People's Party). In 1940, he merged with Malan's Gesuiwerdes to form the **Herenigde Nasionale Party** (Reunited National Party). When he retired in 1941, some of his followers broke away to form a relatively moderate Afrikaner Party. In the 1943 election, Malan's reunited nationalists won 43 seats to the United Party's 89. The Afrikaner Party got nothing.

Smuts's government passed only one explicitly racial law after the war:

Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act (1946): it stopped Indians from owning land in certain areas designated for Whites.

The naivete of the British Lords is apparent when you read the debates that led to these laws. The country's racist drift was an inevitable consequence of its race-based franchise. Governments are accountable to their electorates and what the majority of White South Africans wanted was **segregation and entrenched White control**.

v) Non-European opposition

Mohandas Gandhi arrived in South Africa in 1893 to represent a wealthy Indian merchant in a civil case. Having bought a first-class ticket from Durban to Johannesburg, he was thrown off the train because non-Europeans were not supposed to be in the first-class carriage. He thought about returning to India but became a political activist instead. Influenced by Hindu religious thinking and by Western writers like Tolstoy, he developed a method that is often described as passive resistance. A better description would be **forceful, peaceful disobedience**.

In 1906 Gandhi tested his method when the Transvaal passed a law requiring all Indians and Chinese over the age of 8 to register for an identity document which they would then have to produce on demand. Thousands of people turned up to a protest meeting where they took a vow to ignore the law and be beaten or arrested. By the end of the registration period, only 511 of the roughly 13,000 Indians had registered. We don't have the numbers for the Chinese, but we know that many ended up in prison.

What was the government to do – jail them all? Or maybe beat and arrest each one on discovery, try them, sentence them, jail them, release them, beat and arrest them again… jail them again, release them again… in an endless cycle. If there are enough people, the method

breaks the system. The law was never repealed, but never complied with. The result was a steady stream of non-complying Indians and Chinese into and out of prison.

Non-violence was fundamental to the strategy because it drew attention to injustice if the regime became violent – which it almost always did. Gandhi called the method "**satyagraha**" (truth force). He believed that society as a whole would not stand by indefinitely while violence was being inflicted on peaceful people who were not complying with unjust laws. His approach influenced the drafters of the South African Native National Congress's constitution. At its core, the Congress's method can be described as: appeal to reason through resolutions and petitions (the "politics of the petition"); and mobilize and protest peacefully.

The 1910s saw waves of pass law protests, spontaneous strikes, and Indian mass mobilization. In Natal in 1913, Gandhi led a mass campaign to ignore a law that invalidated non-Christian marriages and instituted a £3 tax on ex-indentured labourers. After an initially harsh response, the government caved in. The law and tax were withdrawn and the government made modest concessions to Indian grievances. Gandhi returned to India in 1914.

When it came to the pass laws, Black women were often at the forefront of protests. In Bloemfontein in 1913 they put their passes into a sack and dumped them at the municipal offices. Later that year they burnt them. The 1910s ended with an SANNC-organized nationwide anti-pass campaign that led to some 700 arrests.

None of this made a dent in the pass-law system.

Strikes by Whites and Africans occurred throughout the period. Most were violently suppressed. A strike by White miners in 1913 was brutally put down with no gains for the miners. Earlier that year, a strike by African miners had taken place after a White overseer had kicked a Black mineworker to death. It was also brutally put down – in this case, with the help of White mineworkers. Another spontaneous strike by Black mineworkers in 1915 was brutally put down – again, without any gains for the mineworkers.

In the meantime, a strand of Marxist worker activism had started in 1915 when a faction of the socialist Labour Party broke away to establish a branch of the **International Socialist League** in South Africa. As Marxists, they opposed the LP's support for Britain in the war. After a series of meetings with Black political activists, they established the first Black trade union in 1917. They called it the **Industrial Workers of Africa**. It included members of the SANNC. By 1918 it had about 1,000 members. It did not play much of a leading role in organizing Black strike action though it often supported wildcat strikes after they'd started.

After the war, inflation and the failure of wages to adjust led to waves of industrial activism. In June 1918 in Johannesburg, Black sanitary workers went on strike for higher wages. Some 152 were arrested and sentenced to hard labour. The **Transvaal Native Congress**, a branch of the SANNC, organized a rally to support them. The resulting public pressure led to a rare

victory – the release of the workers. The newly formed Industrial Workers of Africa **a**nd the SANNC then united to organize a strike of Black mineworkers – but called it off because of poor organization. That didn't stop about 15,000 miners downing tools on 1 July 1918. Police rushed to the scene. Violence followed and the strike collapsed. Eight organizers were arrested including three members of the IWA and two of the SANNC.

Black miners' strikes continued into 1919 and 1920. The 1920 strike was remarkable for its scale and discipline. Some 70,000 workers downed tools in a strike that lasted 12 days. The government crushed it with brutal force. They rounded up workers, beat them with rifle butts, and forced them down the mines at bayonet point. Eleven miners were killed. Most of these strikes had no formal organizational leadership. All met a violent response. Armed private mine-security was often involved. **White capitalists were implacable in their opposition to strikers**. There were no wage gains. And none of the Black strikes attracted White union support.

The most important non-European labour organization of the 1920s had little to do with the SANNC or the IWA. It was a result of a chance meeting in Cape Town between Arthur Batty, a member of the socialist Labour Party, and Clements Kadalie, an immigrant from Nyasaland (now Malawi). Batty was fighting a by-election in the Cape Town Harbour constituency. He asked Kadalie to join his election committee. Although Batty lost, he suggested that he and Kadalie should unionize the mostly Coloured dock workers. The founding meeting of what came to be called the **Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union** (ICU) took place at the Excelsior Hall in Cape Town on 17 January 1919. In his memoirs, Kadalie notes that the meeting was attended by about "half a dozen" Black workers.

The ICU organized the first dock workers' strike for 17 December 1919. It significantly disrupted port operations and ultimately won the dockers a wage increase. The Industrial Workers of Africa got involved, but its contribution was minor. In 1920, numerous smaller unions including the IWA merged with the ICU which quickly became the biggest non-European organization in South Africa. At its peak in the mid- 1920s, it had somewhere between 100,000 and 250,000 members, including farm workers, domestics, teachers, retailers, and industrial workers. By the end of the 1920s, however, it was falling apart as a result of internal divisions, the misuse of funds, and the difficulty of organizing its dispersed membership for mass action.

In 1921, the International Socialist League morphed into the **Communist Party of South Africa**. It opened its membership to all races in 1924. By 1928 it had about 3,000 mostly Black members. Initially, members of the Communist Party could also be members of Kadalie's ICU. But Kadalie was anti-communist, so the ICU expelled its communist members in 1926. It was a messy period for non-European trade unionism. The communists helped to form the **Federation of Non-European Trade Unions** in 1928. It succeeded Kadalie's ICU as the biggest Black labour organization in South Africa. At its peak it had about 15,000 members,

but by 1933 it had collapsed under the dual pressures of the Great Depression and communist factionalism. Compared to the ICU, the Communist Party was small but historically important. At its annual conference in 1928/29, it became **the first political organization in South Africa to call for Black majority rule**. Attempts to take a political approach that was aligned with Russia in the 1930s severely impacted its popularity. By the mid-1930s it was down to a few hundred members.

Through all this time, the SANNC stayed true to its "resolutions and submissions" orientation. But it went through a series of leadership changes that reflected its failure to influence government. In 1917, it replaced John Dube with the more activist Sefako Makgatho. Under Makgatho it helped to organize the peaceful anti-pass march to the Johannesburg pass office in 1919. Police broke up the march with batons and arrested hundreds. Also under Makgatho, it achieved some success in 1922 when the Women's League organized peaceful protests against the pass laws.

The South African Native National Congress changed its name to the **African National Congress** in 1923 and replaced Makgatho with the more moderate Zacharias Mahabane. Then, in 1927, the ANC replaced Mahabane with the more activist Josiah Gumede.

Gumede had been at the SANNC/ANC's founding meeting in 1912. In 1918 he had travelled to Britain with Sol Plaatje to petition the British government for better treatment of Black South Africans after the war. The trip yielded nothing. In 1927 he travelled to Brussels to attend the first conference of the **League against Imperialism**. He came away impressed by the communists' support for colonised people. Believing that the communists could be allies in the ANC's fight for Black rights, he started building links to the CP. The ANC elected him to the presidency soon after his return to South Africa.

The ANC kept poor membership records at the time, so we don't know how big it was.

The ANC's links with the communists were deeply divisive to begin with. At its annual conference in 1930, Gumede gave a fiery speech in which he drew attention to revolutionary activity in China, Japan, and India. He pointed out that the ANC had repeatedly failed in its appeals to Union or British governments. Then he is quoted as saying "*We have to rely on our own strength, on the strength of* ***the revolutionary mass of white workers*** *the world over with whom* ***we must join forces****…*" (for a copy see Johns, 1987, p. 309).

According to the report, Gumede's speech caused "a storm of protest." Anti-communists in the ANC accused the CP of waging a "secret war" within the ANC. The CP's representative at the conference, a Mr Malkinson, replied that "the war" would no longer be secret; and that it would be waged outside the ANC "among the masses." The newly elected president of the ANC, Pixley Seme, welcomed the fight and declared that he would rid the ANC of all communist influences. By the end of the conference, the ANC had reverted to its "resolutions" and "submissions" posture. It passed the following resolution:

"*Whereas the convention expresses its **appreciation** of the Government's action in appointing a commission to inquire into the economic conditions of Natives in urban areas, it **requests** the Minister of Native Affairs not to proceed with the Native Urban Areas Act Amendment Bill…"*

The South African government ignored the request.

Most commentators describe the 1930s as a period of decline for the ANC although it helped to organize a symbolically important meeting of Black leaders including some from other countries called the **All Africa Convention** in Bloemfontein. The meeting did nothing to halt the relentless march of discrimination in South Africa.

vi) SANNC/ANC representations to government

At the heart of the SANNC/ANC's constitutional method before the Second World War were "resolutions" and "deputations." It's therefore important to summarize the various submissions, petitions, speeches, and resolutions that Congress produced on behalf of Black South Africans from 1914 to 1939 (for a copy see Johns, 1987, pp. 125-142).

1914: An Appeal to the Members of the Imperial Parliament and Public of Great Britain
In response to the 1913 Land Act an SANNC deputation travelled to the UK to deliver this appeal.

"After exhausting all constitutional means in South Africa, for the redress of our grievances in connection with the Natives Land Act, it was decided that we should proceed to England to lay our cause before the Imperial Government…

"The Land Act declares in its first clause: A Native shall not enter into any agreement for the purchase or acquisition (of any land) *from a person other than a native…"*

The delegation pointed out that a similar restriction that applied to Whites' rights was meaningless because ***"the Natives have no land to sell…"*** The law restricted Black land ownership to 7% of the country; most of it in remote reserves far from cities. Whites were free to own and trade land in about 90% of the country.

The delegation's submission drew attention to the impact that the law would have on Black South Africans with informal tenure – that is, who were living on traditional land that was far from the designated 7% and that had fallen under the ownership of White farmers:

"The effect of the enforcement of these provisions is that when a native leaves a farm on the expiry of his tenancy he is at once rendered homeless…

"The natives of South Africa are loyal subjects of His Majesty the King… we are confident (that we have established) *the reasonableness of our appeal and the urgent necessity of some public action on the part of the Parliament of the United Kingdom."*

They got nothing.

1919: Petition to King George V from the South African Native National Congress
Having served loyally during the war, a deputation travelled to the UK to appeal for better treatment.

"To His Most Gracious Majesty King George V… We, representing the various tribes of the Bantu people of South Africa record our satisfaction and thankfulness in the triumph of righteousness in this great war…

"We beg to convey to Your Majesty our affectionate loyalty and devotion… We further express the hope that during Your Majesty's Reign all races and Nations will be treated fairly and with justice…"

The petition then went on to list the contributions that Black South Africans had made to the war effort: 17,000 soldiers took part in the German East African campaign under Smuts's command; 25,000 worked as labourers in French docks or behind the trenches in Flanders:

"All these acts were performed by Your Majesty's subjects who have no voice in the disposition of affairs of the country of which they are the aboriginal inhabitants…"

The delegation quoted from the speeches of people who had thanked Black South Africans for their service:

Lord Buxton to an assembly of tribal leaders in Johannesburg in 1918: *"My duty is to thank you, on behalf of His Majesty the King, for the assistance and loyalty which you have shown during these four years of strain and stress… **I can assure you it will not be forgotten**."*

PM Louis Botha after 651 Black soldiers had died when the Mendi sank in the English Channel: *"If we ever lived in times when native people of South Africa have shown great and true loyalty, it is in times like the present… I have never experienced a time when the Natives have displayed greater tact and loyalty than they have done in the dark days through which we are now going…"*

The delegation reminded the British that Queen Victoria had decreed that there should be no racial discrimination when Britain annexed Natal in 1843. It noted:

"It is with painful regret that we remind Your Majesty that these Victorian principles which our people associate with the high ideals of the British Constitution have been departed from and ignored by Your Majesty's representative Governments in South Africa.

"… the black inhabitants' inherent right of freedom and the right to move at liberty is unwarrantedly restricted… the individual cannot bargain under existing laws with his labour as he chooses. Equal opportunities for trading are denied and the avenues of civilized advancement are limited.

"In pursuance of Britain's war aims and her love for free institutions for all peoples under her flag, the only solution is to have those principles (that is, of equal rights) *applied to South Africa…"*

The delegation got nothing – no disability pensions, no monthly state pensions for widows; and no intervention with respect to the Union government's discriminatory agenda.

Through the 1920s, the ANC diligently participated in Union consultative forums like the Governor-General's Native Conferences. They held congresses, passed resolutions, wrote articles in newspapers, printed pamphlets, and documented speeches at meetings. To no avail.

1926: Report on the Annual Conference of the African National Congress

The backdrop to the conference was Hertzog's 1925 speech about his solution to "the Native problem."

As already noted, Hertzog had outlined his "solution" to the "Native problem" in a speech in November 1925. The ANC held its annual congress on 4-5 January 1926. One of the topics on the agenda was "segregation." At the start of the session, a Rev. Pitso from Winburg moved that "… *the Congress place on record its sincere and **hearty appreciation** of the Prime Minister's courage in tackling the vexed question known as the Native Problem in a sympathetic way…*"

Delegates disagreed. The ANC's vice-president C.S. Mabaso kicked off the discussion by saying that he was "puzzled" by Pitso's motion. But the ANC president Mahabane decided to support the motion on the grounds that it at least made the Union government's intentions explicit. Clements Kadalie, the anti-communist head of the ICU which, at that time, was at the height of its popularity, then jumped up to reject the motion:

"We have to tell the Prime Minister and the White people emphatically that we will not accept the proposals of the Prime Minister. You can pass such a resolution at the Government Conference in Pretoria, but you will not pass it at the African National Convention." (Thunderous applause)

As reported, Kadalie went on to say that his rejection of the proposal emanated *"... not from London or India, but from the 7 million Natives in the Union, whom the Prime Minister wanted to place in a position of inferiority in the land of their birth.* (Hertzog) *spoke of a Native problem. This is no Native problem, but a European problem of weakness, greed, and robbery. (Loud applause)*

"This is a White problem of robbing the aboriginal races of South Africa of their inheritance, and we cannot congratulate the enemy of our race, our wives, and children..."

It's reported that the rest of Kadalie's sentence was "drowned in applause" at which point the conference Chairperson asked Kadalie to sit down because he'd "spoken quite enough..."

The proposal, Kadalie's response, and the subsequent responses of delegates, illustrate the internal tensions that existed between the ANC's less and more activist members. By the end of the conference, the delegates had managed to formulate a unified set of resolutions:

"Congress therefore... calls upon parliament to take steps in the direction of ***amending the South Africa Act of 1909*** *as to make provision for adequate representation of non-European races domiciled within the borders of the Union of South Africa.*

"... this Convention is convinced that a solution that is likely to be acceptable to all parties concerned would be found if ***a round table conference*** *of an equal number of the representatives of the Union Government and the African National Congress,* ***as well as*** *other non-European organizations could be called together at as early a date as possible."*

That was in January 1926. More than sixty years later there would still be no representative government and there would still not have been a "round table conference." By 1932, the ANC's efforts had achieved so little that Pixley Seme, the president, wrote a pamphlet called "The African National Congress, is it Dead?"

Formal organization continued through the 1930s, but had little impact on the Union government. Members of both the All Africa Convention and the ANC stood for election when the **Natives' Representative Council** was established in 1937. Prominent leaders John Dube, Selope Thema, Richard Godlo, James Moroka, and George Champion were elected. True to form, the Union government ignored the NRC.

1939: Resolutions of the ANC Annual Conference (15-18 December)
Prime Minister Jan Smuts had declared war on Germany on 6 September 1939

1. This conference... **respectfully requests** the Union Government to repeal all differential legislation so that the African is ruled under the General laws of the country.

2. This conference **strongly urges** the Government to give the trade unions of African workers the same rights under the Industrial Conciliation Act as prescribed for European workers.

…

4. Feeding of School Children: That responsible authorities be required to provide milk and soup kitchens for African children **as they do** for Indian, Coloured, and European school children.

…

6. Congress **strongly protests** against the actions of municipalities in making wholesale evictions of Africans from proclaimed European residential areas…
7. War: That unless the Government grants the African full democratic and citizenship rights, the **African National Congress** is not prepared to advise Africans **to participate in the war**.

By the time the ANC passed the above resolution, mass opposition to the government had collapsed. Kadalie's Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union had collapsed. The Federation of Non-European Trade Unions had collapsed. Membership of the Communist Party had dwindled to hundreds. And the ANC mostly organized meetings. This would start to change when the ANC elected Dr Alfred Xuma to the presidency in 1940.

vii) Political and worker organization in the 1940s

By the early 1940s, large-scale non-European resistance to laws like the pass laws consisted mostly of invisible non-compliance. The White government could build incentives to comply, for instance, by making it impossible to get formal employment without a pass. But that didn't stop the development of an illegal informal economy in the urban areas. In spite of the government's attempts at influx control, the Black urban population around Johannesburg grew by anywhere between 50% and 100% between 1939 and 1946. What was the State to do?

Police raids!

Black South Africans without passes didn't advertise their presence. They were just there. This invisible non-compliance was a fundamental challenge to the system. All the State could do was attempt semi-targeted police raids against illegal activity in Black towns. These tended to focus on informal, not strictly legal businesses like shebeens (pubs). The raids were often violent. On 15 June 1941, a White police constable shot and killed two Black men during a police raid in a suburb of Johannesburg called Sophiatown. According to contemporary reports, a pregnant Black woman had been severely beaten in a similar raid.

The community was outraged. The **Transvaal African Congress** organized a mass meeting for 26 June; and on 8 July, a high-level ANC delegation, led by the newly elected Alfred Xuma, got a meeting with the Minister of Justice. According to an ANC report on the meeting (for a copy see Karis, pp. 166-168), they discussed the conduct of police raids, the violent treatment of arrested people, the reckless use of firearms, the inability of Africans to protect themselves when assaulted, and the difficulty that Africans had when reporting bad treatment. The report records that the Minister responded sympathetically. These consequences of law enforcement seem to have been genuinely troubling to some White authorities. But they were the inevitable

consequence of laws that were impossible to enforce. Brutal police action did little to stop the tide of illegal urbanization and business formation. For the next 30 years, State brutality as a consequence of attempts to enforce unenforceable laws would become an ever-increasing feature of South Africa's social landscape.

The government also gradually lost control of worker activism. The 1925 **Wage Act** had established a Wage Board to regulate wages, pre-empt strikes, and reduce the pressure for large-scale trade unionism. Through the 1930s, the Wage Board managed to adjust minimum wages just enough to succeed. Then war-time inflation intensified worker poverty. Between September 1942 and February 1943, the White establishment was hit by waves of wildcat strikes by Black workers – the most sustained labour unrest since 1920. Disciplined Black leadership – often not linked to any organization – kept the workers in line. The government was reluctant to respond with the usual violence because it needed Black support for the war. Most strikes were quickly settled by agreeing to higher wages for Black workers and Black unionization took off. Membership of the umbrella **Council of Non-European Trade Unions** grew from about 37,000 in 1943, to about 160,000 in 1945.

In 1946, Black miners hit South Africa with the biggest strike in its history. Estimates vary as to how many workers participated – somewhere between 60,000 and 100,000. But the war was over. The government reverted to form. The strike was brutally suppressed: 9 miners were killed, hundreds arrested, and more than 1,000 seriously injured.

In the meantime, a more activist ANC was learning how to become more prominent in support of spontaneous Black mass action. The Alexandra bus boycott is an example. Alexandra had been designated a Black township in 1912. Because that was before the 1913 Land Act, Blacks were allowed to own property there. It was about 14.4 kms from the Johannesburg city centre. Most of its residents commuted to work by bus. In 1943, bus fares were raised from 4d to 5d. Workers responded with a boycott. For the next +/-10 days, 20,000 workers walked the 14.4 kms to and from work. Among them was a young Nelson Mandela. The company caved in. Fares reverted to 4d.

The most consequential decision taken during this period was the ANC's to form a youth league. It launched in September 1944 in Johannesburg with a new generation of leaders: Anton Lembede, Peter Mda, Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo, and Nelson Mandela. The ANCYL's founding documents merit lengthy excerpts (for copies see Karis, pp. 300-331).

1944: Congress Youth League Manifesto
An analytical document and call to arms published in March 1944.

The manifesto began with an observation about Whites' belief in their superiority:

> *"The African regards Civilisation as the common heritage of all Mankind… The majority of White men* (however,) *regard it as the destiny of the White race to dominate… Whites* (believe) *that the White race is the destined leader of the world…"*

Then it drew attention to the legislation that had prevented Africans from improving their lives: the 1913 Land Act, the 1923 Urban Areas Act, the 1927 Native Administration Act, the 1937 Native Laws Amendment Act. It went on:

"This obstruction is disguised as letting him (the African) *'develop along his own lines.'* (The African) *is, however, suspicious of any 'lines' of development imposed on him and elects to develop along the lines of his own choosing.*

*"To **mislead the world** and make it believe that the White man in South Africa is helping the African on the road to civilized life, the White man has arrogated to himself the role of Trustee..."*

"These conditions have made the African lose all faith in talk of Trusteeship. HE NOW ELECTS TO DETERMINE HIS FUTURE BY HIS OWN EFFORTS. He has realised that to trust to the mere good grace of the White man will not free him..."

The manifesto wrote off progressive and liberal Whites in a sentence: "*... these are so few that their influence on national policies is but little felt*."

It noted criticisms of the ANC:

"Critics attribute the inability of Congress in the last twenty years to advance the national cause to its erratic policy of yielding to oppression, regarding itself as a body of gentlemen... Critics further allege that in that period Congress declined and became an organization of the privileged few...

"Some of these criticisms are founded on fact... but it does not advance the national cause if people concentrate on these while little or no effort is made to build Congress from within..."

In other words, there is truth to the criticisms, but we must rebuild from within.

1945: Some Basic Principles of African Nationalism
An article by ANCYL president Lembede in the League's journal, *Inyaniso* (The Truth).

The article began by rejecting Communism and Nazism. Then Lembede pointed out that various Nations (Greeks, Romans, Jews, French, Germans, Russians) had made important contributions to Human Civilization. He believed that Africa had an important contribution to make by combining the best of Civilization with the best of what was African:

*"The fundamental structure of Bantu Society is **socialistic**. There was no individual ownership of land... There were no landlords... Socialism is our valuable legacy from our ancestors. Our task is to develop this by the infusion of new and modern socialistic ideas.*

"In Bantu Society, the worth of a man was not assessed by wealth... Any man could rise to any position by virtue of the qualities of courage and ability... In our Councils of Khotla any citizen could take part in discussions... The main point is the assessment of human value by moral and spiritual qualities...

*"... our ethical system today has to be based on Christian morals since there is nothing better anywhere in the world. Morality is the soul of society. Decay and decline of morals bring about the decay and decline of society... It is only **African Nationalism** that can save the African people."*

A Khotla/Kgotla is a traditional communal forum for governance and decision-making. Its principles are: free speech, consensus building, reconciliation. Lembede argued that Africans would not be able to make their contribution to Humanity until they were free. Christian morality was the one foreign ideology he believed in. Africa's contribution would lie in its non-

Marxist form of communal ownership (socialism); and in the spirit that underpinned traditional governance (democratic communal forums).

1946: Freedom in Our Lifetime

Lembede again in *Inkundla ya Bantu* (Bantu Forum) published by Verulam Press.

*"A new spirit of **African nationalism** is pervading African society. The African National Congress Youth League is called upon to aid this process. Africans have inhabited Africa from time immemorial: Africa belongs to them. Out of the heterogeneous tribes, there must emerge a **homogeneous** nation…*

"Cooperation between Africans and other non-Europeans on common problems may be desirable. But this occasional cooperation can only take place (recognizing that) *non-Europeans are separate units…*

"(If Africans don't achieve freedom) *…they will not survive the satanic forces, economic, social and political unleashed against them. Africans are being mowed down by diseases… Moral and physical degeneration is assuming alarming dimensions… As a result of educational and industrial colour bars, young African men and women are converted into juvenile delinquents.*

"It will only be when Africans are free that they will be able to fully bring to fruition their divine talent and contribute something new towards the general welfare and prosperity of Mankind… only then will Africans occupy their rightful place among the nations of the world.

*"After national freedom, then socialism. The achievement of national liberation will usher in a new era, the era of African socialism. Our immediate task, however, is not socialism, but national liberation. Our motto: **Freedom in Our Lifetime**."*

Summary: we will not achieve true freedom unless we are united and put ourselves first. Others may help but we can't afford to let them dilute our efforts with their theories. **African liberation requires a single-minded focus by Africans for Africans**.

The need for focus underpinned the ANCYL's response to an invitation in 1945 from Ruth First to affiliate with the Communist Party's Progressive Youth Council:

"Regarding your invitation we wish to state that: We are the African National Congress Youth League and as such we are bound to keep within the precincts of the policy of the African National Congress.

*"… there is **a yawning gulf** between your philosophic outlook and ours. We are devoting our energies to the struggle for national liberation. Our task is to organize, galvanise and consolidate the numerous African tribes into one homogeneous nation.*

"We are alarmed by the painful realisation that 150,000,000 African blacks have for centuries lain dormant in this dark Continent. We consider that the hour has now struck that the black African masses as an organized powerful force be made effective (and) *that their voice be heard in international affairs.*

"… cooperation at the present juncture is premature. It can only result in jealousies, rivalry and suspicion. In consequence therefore we do not see our way clear towards affiliation with your Council."

One might think that Lembede's commitment to African socialism would find a home in communism. But both Lembede and Mda were committed African Christian socialists. They rejected communism because it was European, atheist, and theoretically incorrect about Africa's problems. Later leaders like Sisulu, Tambo, and Mandela would be more pragmatic.

In the meantime, the ANC itself was also becoming less compromising. Although it hadn't supported the 1936 Representation of Natives Act, ANC leaders had stood for election to the NRC in 1937 and 1942. For them, the government's brutal response to the miners' strike in

1946 was the last straw. Z.K. Matthews, the ANC chair of the NRC, informed Smuts that the NRC was going to adjourn indefinitely (for a copy see Karis, pp. 224-233):

"At two elections the African people have elected to the Council some of their ablest men… How has the government treated this product of her (that is, the government's) *political genius?*

"… the persons responsible for laying down policy have not attended the sessions. The Minister of Native Affairs makes occasional appearances to open a session… the reports of the proceedings are not tabled in Parliament.

"…an adjournment of the Council for an indefinite period until the Government showed evidence of its intention to give more serious consideration to the views of the Council, seemed the least drastic action that the Council could take."

Matthews' submission documented a point-by-point failure by the government to pay any attention to the Council on pass laws, influx control, the distribution of land, governance in urban areas, etc. Hertzog's **Natives' Representative Council** had been a nine-year waste of time.

Smuts responded by calling a meeting. In a lengthy discourse he noted that the creation of Native Reserves had not stopped the tide of migration to the cities. He suggested reforms: that the NRC be given executive power; that it be an entirely elected body; and that it have formal association with the Advisory Boards that the government had established for Black governance in urban areas (for a copy see Karis, pp. 233-250).

In May 1947, Xuma rejected Smuts's proposals:

"*We have examined the proposals of General Smuts on the native policy and find them disappointing… The Prime Minister* (has) *side-stepped the main cause of the deadlock, namely, the demand of the Council for* ***the repeal of the discriminatory colour legislation*** *against the Africans…*

"To the uninformed the Prime Minister's proposals might appear to be an improvement… but in fact… as long as discriminatory legislation remains on the statute book, the Africans are being asked ***to administer their own domination and oppression*** *under the cloak* (of being given) *responsibility in the administration of their affairs.*

"We submit that… there is no such thing as native affairs apart from South African national affairs… we do not accept any proposal that does not provide for ***direct representation of all sections of the community in all legislative bodies****."*

The memorandum went on to enumerate the ANC's demands: direct representation of Africans in all legislative bodies, abolition of the pass laws, removal of land ownership restrictions, recognition of African Trade Unions, adequate housing, free and compulsory education for all African children, and the re-establishment of the status of African chiefs.

Within a year, all of this would be moot. An increasingly assertive ANC would run into the brick wall of D.F. Malan's Afrikaner nationalists.

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Glossary for Chapter 2: National Party Government from 1948 to 1980

Abbreviations

ASM	African Students Movement (1968 – the precursor to the SA Students Movement).
ANC	African National Congress (1912 to the present – name changed to ANC in 1923).
ANCYL	African National Congress Youth League (1944 to the present).
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement. Never a formal organization. Banned in 1977.
BPC	Black People's Convention (1972 until banned in 1977).
CP	Communist Party of South Africa, South African Communist Party (1921 to the present).
GNP	Gesuiwerde Nasionale Party (1934-1940). English = Purified National Party.
HNP[1]	Herenigde Nasionale Party (1940-1951). English = Reunited National Party.
HNP[2]	Herstigte Nasionale Party (1969 to the present). English = Re-established National Party.
MK	uMkhonto we Sizwe.
NP	National Party (1914-1934; 1951-1998).
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress (1959 – banned in 1960).
PFP	Progressive Federal Party (1977-1989).
SAIC	South African Indian Congress (1921 – became dormant in the 1970s).
SASM	South African Students' Movement (1972-1977, emerged from the ASM).
UP	United Party (1934-1977). Renamed the New Republic Party in 1977.

Homeland: the South African government called the areas it had set aside for Black South Africans "homelands." Calling them "homelands" was a rhetorical device to imply that that's where Blacks should live. They could opt for a nominal kind of independence. Four did: Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, and Ciskei.

Verkramp, verlig: in a speech to an Afrikaner student group in 1966, Willem de Klerk – then an academic – described Afrikaners as "verkramp" (conservative) or "verlig" (enlightened). The words stuck as a way to distinguish between Afrikaners who stuck dogmatically to apartheid and Afrikaners who wanted change.

Chapter 2
National Party Government from 1948 to 1980

White South African electoral politics in the run-up to the 1948 elections is a story of splits, one marriage of Depression-era necessity (the United Party), more splits – and reunions.

The advent of the First World War showed the extent of Afrikaner resentment over what had happened in the Anglo-Boer War: Hertzog's breakaway National Party netted 30% of the vote in the 1915 election. It was an electoral dynamic that would continue to play out for the next 34 years. With support from Afrikaners, Hertzog continued to build until he got 41% in 1929. But his merger with Smuts in 1934 destroyed his base and a new split began: D.F. Malan's breakaway Purified/Gesuiwerde Nationalists got 31% of the vote in 1938. With the support of Hertzog after the Second World War split, Malan's Reunited/Herenigde Nationalists (HNP) got 37% in 1943.

Students of South African politics know that Smuts famously failed to update constituency boundaries before the 1948 election. Because of South Africa's first-past-the-post electoral system, an Afrikaner coalition of Malan's Reunited Nationalists with the remnants of Hertzog's original supporters won the election with just 42% of the vote. Smuts's UP got 49% and lost. The winners governed as a coalition until they merged in 1951 to form the modern National Party. It was the beginning of the end for the briefly mighty United Party; and the beginning of more than 40 years of NP government.

This chapter begins by looking at the NP's manifesto for the 1948 election.

i) Excerpts from the (Reunited) National Party's election manifesto

D.F. Malan was a highly educated man with a Doctorate in Divinity from the Dutch University of Utrecht. He had been a Dutch Reformed minister and a newspaper editor in the Cape before becoming a member of parliament in 1918. These excerpts from his party's election manifesto are the blueprint for what happened over the next 30+ years of NP government.

Race Relations Policy of the National Party

"There are two guiding principles determining the South African policy affecting the non-whites. One line of thought favours ***a policy of integration****, conferring equal rights – including the franchise – on all civilised and educated citizens within the same political structure, as the non-whites progressively become used to democratic institutions."*

Note: this was the idea behind the Cape's non-racial franchise. It is what the "aboriginal natives of South Africa resident in the Transvaal" had asked for in 1908.

"Opposed to this is ***the policy of apartheid****, a concept derived from the experience of the White population of the country, in harmony with such Christian principles as justice and equity. It is a policy which sets itself the task of preserving and safeguarding the racial identity of the White population…* (and) *of*

preserving and safeguarding the identity of the indigenous peoples as separate racial groups, with opportunities to develop into ***self-governing national units****…*

"The choice before us, is one of these two divergent courses: either that of integration, which would amount to ***national suicide*** *on the part of the Whites; or that of apartheid, which professes to preserve the identity and safeguard the future of every race…*

"It is the primary calling of the State to promote the happiness and well-being of its citizens, non-White as well as White. Realising that such a task can best be accomplished by ***safeguarding the white race****, the National Party professes this as the fundamental guiding principle of its policy… The party rejects any policy of oppression or exploitation of the non-Whites by the Whites as incompatible with the Christian character of our people…*

"… the application of the policy… is the only sound basis on which the identity and the survival of each race can be assured… ***Within their own areas*** *the non-White communities will be afforded full opportunity to develop…"*

Summary: ensuring that Whites are in control of their destiny is the only way to guarantee the welfare of all South Africans. Enabling each race to develop and eventually govern itself in its own territory is the Christian way to do things. Non-European communities will have every opportunity to develop in their territories.

The Coloured Community

"The Coloureds occupy a position midway between White and non-White. In their case the policy of the party is to apply ***total apartheid*** *(social, residential, industrial and political) between them and both the Bantu and the White communities. Intermarriage of Whites and Coloureds will be prohibited.*

"The present undesirable system which gives the Coloureds in the Cape Province the franchise on the same voters' roll as the Whites, ***will be abolished*** (to be replaced) *by a system which* (gives) *them three* (White) *representatives in Parliament. In their own areas the Coloureds will elect their own boards to function within the framework of the* (White Parliamentary department, which will have) *higher authority.*

"Special attention will be given to the provision of welfare services which, by progressively enlisting the services of the Coloureds themselves, will eventually reach self-sufficiency. An educational system, congenial to the Coloured community, is being envisaged."

Summary: apartheid for Coloureds in designated geographical areas with rigid segregation from Whites and Blacks. The White governing executive will have ultimate control.

Bantu Policy

"… our policy envisages segregating the most important ethnic groups (tribes like the Zulu or Xhosa) *in their own areas where every group will be enabled to develop into a self-sufficient unit.*

"We endorse the principle of ***territorial segregation*** *of the Bantu and the Whites. More ground for the Bantu in terms of the Act of 1936 will only be granted after judicious consideration… efforts will be made to encourage soil improvement … The reserves should be the* ***national home*** *of the Bantu. There, their educational institutions should be situated and their social services should be provided instead of the present practice of providing them in urban locations. … Opportunities for industrial enterprise will be created in order progressively to stimulate production and ensure stability, for which purpose planning boards will be formed.*

"Aware of the problems connected with the influx of Bantu into the urban areas the National Party pledges itself to safeguard the European character of the urban centres… Separate residential areas will be allotted to the Bantu and congestion and slums will be prevented. The Bantu in the urban areas should be

*regarded as **migratory citizens** not entitled to political or social rights equal to those of the Whites. The entire migration of Bantu into and from the cities should be controlled by the State…*

*"Redundant Bantu in the urban centres should be **returned to their original habitat** in the reserves. Bantu from the country areas or the reserves should be admitted to the European cities or towns only as **temporary employees**, obliged to return to their homes after the expiry of their employment."*

Summary: Each tribe will have its own, designated territory. Those territories are their only home. Outside of the territories they are migrant workers and will live in designated Native Locations. The White government will ensure that these aren't slums. If a person can't find work, they must go back to their territories.

***"**The interests and employment prospects of the White workers in white areas will be protected. As far as is practicable **apartheid will be observed in the factories, trades and industrial localities**. Being opposed to the organization of trade unions for the Bantu the party envisages a system of State guardianship in order to protect their interests.*

***"**A national system of **employment control** with a central employment bureau to administer the entire network, will be established with a view to achieving as flexible as possible a system of demand and supply of labour with a minimum of waste. This would imply thorough stocktaking of both the requirements and the labour potential in order effectively to divert the available labour into the various channels of farming, industry, mining and urban employment."*

Summary: socio-economic engineering on a grand scale to create a kind of book-keeping based, mechanical system of migrant Black labour for White industry.

***"Education** should be essentially **Christian national** in character adapted to the needs and the development level of the vast body of Bantu people. It should have a strong moral purpose…It should be State-controlled… Financing should be conducted in accordance with the cultural level and the economic capacity of the Bantu people, and should be more in proportion to their contribution to the national income than is the case at present… The Bantu are progressively to assume responsibility for financing and controlling their own education, under white supervision."*

Comment: the education budget should be cut to be proportional to Black contributions to taxes. The curriculum should be tailored to what the White government believed to be "the cultural level" of Black South Africans – in essence, an inferior curriculum.

*"**Bantu Self-government**: The party is in favour of a system of local government for the Bantu, more or less along the lines of the Bunga, which will uphold the authority of the tribal chiefs and enlist the services of educated Bantu. Such local councils are to be established in all the reserves with the prospect of developing into separate central councils for the different ethnic groups… Initially supervised by White officials, these councils will progressively be granted a measure of legislative and administrative self-government, in accordance with their ability to manage their own affairs, but compatible with the guardianship of the State.*

"The Natives' Representative Council is to be abolished. Boards are to be established in urban locations… (They) *shall have no prospect of developing into self-governing bodies. The system thus envisaged will eventually satisfy Bantu political aspirations more gratifyingly than the political rights in White areas as advocated by the United Party."*

Note: Bunga were administrative bodies established by the British in places like the Eastern Cape. They consisted of traditional leaders and educated Black elites. The NP was proposing

that there could eventually be self-government, but under White control. Black South Africans would never have democratically elected representatives in White urban areas.

The manifesto concluded with a brief statement about Christian mission activities. Any Church or mission which "*frustrated*" the policy of apartheid, would "*not be tolerated*."

A deeply held belief in European superiority underpinned the manifesto. In this view, it would be better for everyone if Europeans stayed in control. The Christian thing to do, however, was to enable Africans to develop and govern in their own way in their own territories. Blacks should be a managed source of labour for Whites.

Attitude to the Indians

"*The Party regards the Indians as **a foreign element** which cannot be assimilated in the South African set-up. Not being native to this country, they cannot expect more preferential treatment than an immigrant community.*

*"We accordingly have in mind the **repatriation** of as many Indians as possible… No Indian immigrants are henceforth to be admitted to the country. With the Indians still in our midst a definite policy of apartheid should be enforced between them and the Whites, and likewise… between them and the indigenous non-White sections.*

"(There will be) ***no representation** in* (South African) *legislative assemblies… **Separate residential areas** will be allotted to the Indians, who will not be allowed to reside or possess property in white areas. Whites will not be allowed to reside, trade or possess property in Indian areas. Adequate compensation will be paid for properties confiscated in White or in Indian areas.*

*"Trading facilities for Indians outside their own areas will be **drastically curtailed**. Eventually **Indian traders** in Bantu areas and locations **will disappear**, trade in such areas being the prerogative of the Bantu themselves. Migration of Indians from province to province will be put under restraint.*

"Family welfare aid for Indians should be abolished. Our party will not tolerate subversive propaganda among the non-Whites against the Whites."

In summary: Indians, you are only immigrants. You can never be citizens. We want you to go back to India. You will only be allowed to own property and live and trade in areas that we designate for you. You will not even have the limited forms of political representation that we're giving Coloureds and Blacks.

Anyone looking at the dispersion of ethnic groups in South Africa when the manifesto was published, would have realized that it had barbaric implications for the forced movement of people from one place to another; and that it would flout the property rights of many people (but very few Whites); and that it had unjust long-term implications for how much land Black/Coloured/Indian/Chinese South Africans would be allowed to own.

ii) Apartheid government and organized Black opposition: the first few years

At the heart of the NP's policy was territorial segregation: each of South Africa's races should live in its own areas. That's where their social facilities should be: schools, churches, mosques, temples, hospitals, shops, sports stadiums. To the extent that the races had to share a common social space – for instance, at work or in a city centre or in a big hospital – they should be

separated: stand in different queues, use different toilets, be in different wards. Except… since it was impractical to have four or more of everything everywhere, there would mostly just be two: one for Europeans and one for everyone else.

New apartheid legislation came quickly:

> **Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (1949)/Immorality Amendment Act (1950):** the first prohibited marriage outside of a person's race group. The second criminalized sexual activity between the races.
>
> **Population Registration Act (1950):** everyone's race had to be recorded on their identity documents. This became a basic instrument of discrimination and control.
>
> **Group Areas Act (1950):** segregated areas were reserved for each race group. In practice, this led to the forced relocation of Blacks, Coloureds, Indians, and Chinese to make way for Whites.
>
> **Bantu Authorities Act (1951)**: created the "homelands," that is, government controlled tribal territories for Blacks. Tribal councils were established in each territory to create a limited form of self-government under White control.

In the meantime, the ANC's youth league continued to expand. Shortly after the 1948 White general election, a teacher at the University of Fort Hare (Godfrey Pitje) wrote to Lembede's successor as president, Peter Mda, about forming a branch at the University. Mda replied in August 1948 (for a copy see Karis, 1987, p. 319):

> *"Fort Hare is just the place to start a Youth League. The young people there are the intellectual leaders to be, and a growing consciousness of their role in the national liberation struggle will add new vigour and force to the struggle for national liberation.…*
>
> And later in the letter: "(A clash with the Senior Congress) *is inevitable because the Congress Senior Leadership reflects the dying order of pseudo-liberalism and conservatism, of appeasement and compromises. The Youth League reflects the new spirit of Africa."*

Pitje founded the Fort Hare branch later that year. A student and gifted orator called Robert Sobukwe became a member. Early in 1949, Sobukwe and Pitje drafted a new policy document for the ANC. They called it "Programme of Action." At the ANC's national congress in December 1949, the ANCYL engineered a change in senior leadership. Xuma was replaced as the president by someone recruited by the ANCYL called James Moroka. League leaders Peter Mda, Walter Sisulu, Oliver Tambo, and Godfrey Pitje were elected to the national executive. Robert Sobukwe became the ANCYL's National Secretary. The ANC adopted the Sobukwe-Pitje "Programme of Action" as policy:

> **Programme of Action:** The principles of the Programme of Action are inspired by the desire to achieve National Freedom. By National Freedom we mean freedom from White domination. This implies the rejection of the conception of apartheid, or white leadership which are all motivated by the idea of white domination… the African people claim the right of self-determination.
>
> With this object in view, we will continue to fight for the abolition of all differential political institutions, the boycotting of which we accept… in addition, to employ the following weapons:

immediate and active boycott, strike, civil disobedience, non-cooperation and such other means as may bring about the accomplishment and realisation of our aspirations.

Preparations for **a national stoppage of work for one day** as a mark of protest against the reactionary policy of the government.

The program was a comprehensive policy document. It covered communications, media-management, fund-raising, and financial management. It included drafts for economic, educational, and cultural policy. Its "weapons" were to be the weapons of assertive, peaceful disobedience – what Gandhi had called truth force.

It may look as though the ANC had something in common with the NP: both talked about "self-determination." But the NP would require White domination in perpetuity to pursue its vision. It would need oppressive force to a) limit Africans to designated Black territories; b) move them to those territories; and c) limit their access to resources. The Africans' version, on the other hand, would require complete political freedom.

The first national stayaway was organized for 1 May 1950. Sources report that up to 40% of the workers in and around Johannesburg participated. It started peacefully but became violent in the evening when clashes broke out between people who had gone to work and those who'd stayed at home. The police intervened and according to some estimates, 18 people were killed.

Undeterred, a second stayaway was organized for 26 June. Reports indicate that about 80% of the workers in and around Johannesburg stayed away. It was relatively peaceful. People lost their jobs, but few were arrested. In time, just staying home would evolve into a potent political weapon. 26 June became a symbolically important day for protests and rallies.

The success of the stayaway motivated a new piece of repressive legislation:

> **Suppression of Communism Act (1950):** outlawed communism. Included any anti-apartheid activity in its definition of communism. Punishment included banning orders and detentions. An early casualty of the Act was the non-communist ANC leader, Oliver Tambo.

A banning order typically confined someone to a geographical area (their home), allowed them only one visitor at a time, outlawed them from publishing anything or talking at meetings, prevented them from visiting institutions like newspaper offices or law courts; and often required them to report regularly to the local police station.

At its annual conference in December 1951, the ANC decided to escalate its protests by calling for a nationwide Defiance Campaign. The **South African Indian Congress** joined the campaign. It started on 26 June 1952.

iii) The Defiance Campaign and its aftermath

The strategy behind the Defiance Campaign came from the Programme of Action: break apartheid laws by simple non-compliance; get arrested; refuse to pay a fine; go to jail; carry

on indefinitely; overwhelm the jails; bring the system to a halt. An ANC news bulletin later that year summarized the kinds of law-breaking that occurred on the first day (see in the sources: Americans for South African Resistance):

- 52 Johannesburg volunteers were arrested at the location outside a town called Boksburg for **not having permits** that allowed them in and out;
- 54 Johannesburg volunteers were arrested at 11:30 pm that night for **being on the streets**. A Black curfew required Blacks to be indoors from 11:00 pm;
- 30 Port Elizabeth volunteers were arrested for **using facilities reserved for Whites** at local railway stations;
- An undisclosed number of volunteers were arrested in Worcester in the Cape Province for using facilities reserved for Whites at the local post office.

Malan's government responded by arresting law-breakers, raiding ANC and SAIC offices, and detaining leaders. More than 8,000 people were arrested over the course of the Campaign. Early in 1953, the government passed two new repressive laws:

> **Public Safety Act (4 March 1953):** South Africa's "state of emergency" Act. It legalized detention without trial and the suspension of normal law during a state of emergency.
>
> **Criminal Law Amendment Act (13 March 1953)**: criminalized protests against apartheid laws. Even peaceful protest became a crime. Penalties included fines, flogging, and imprisonment.

Whites were not sympathetic to the Campaign because it "broke the law"! The fact that the laws were unjust and that the protests were peaceful, didn't seem to count for much. Ten months into the campaign, White South Africans went to the polls. They let Black South Africans know what they thought by how they voted: the NP was re-elected in a landslide – it won 94 seats in the 159-seat parliament.

The campaign had been intended to be indefinite, but shortly after the election the ANC's new president, Chief Albert Luthuli, called it off. He argued that the personal cost to protesters of the new laws was too high. He called for a strategic review. The campaign had failed in its main purpose, that is, to make the system unsustainable by overwhelming it. But the Defiance Campaign had lasting impacts on the ANC: first, ANC membership rose from about 7,000 to more than 100,000; and second, it strengthened the hand of pragmatists like Sisulu, Tambo, and Mandela who argued that the ANC needed to form alliances with all anti-apartheid organizations including South Africa's communists.

Towards the end of 1953, the Cape leader of the ANC, Z.K. Matthews, called for a Congress of the People. It would not break laws. Its purpose would be to formalise an anti-apartheid alliance and draw up a kind of manifesto for South Africa. According to various sources, some 50,000 volunteers criss-crossed the country to record what people wanted in a government. In June 1955, about 3,000 representatives met in Kliptown outside Johannesburg to form the Congress Alliance and agree a Charter. A draft of the Charter was drawn up before the

Congress by a small committee, many of whom were White communists. They called it "The Freedom Charter." It passed by acclamation on the first day. On the second day, police broke up the meeting. But the Alliance had formed and the Charter had passed.

The opening lines of the Freedom Charter are:

> *We, the People of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know:*
>
> That South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people.

Both the Alliance and the Charter met with immediate disapproval from the ANC's Africanists (Peter Mda, Godfrey Pitje, Robert Sobukwe). We can get a sense of how they felt from a newspaper they published in 1958 when they were still members of the ANC (*The Africanist*, June 1958):

> *"The Kliptown Charter did not emanate as a finished document from the A.N.C. It emanated as much from the **Vodka Cocktail** parties of Parktown and Lower Houghton. The black masses who met at Kliptown were merely pawns…*
>
> *The statement of the first clause that 'South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white' is incorrect… every inch of Africa belongs to the Africans."*

To the ANC's Africanists, South Africa's problem was simple: Europeans had taken everything. For the Charter to include clauses about sharing ["South Africa belongs to all who live in it…, the land should be shared among those who work it…, the people should share in the country's wealth"] was, to use Sobukwe's words "a colossal fraud." Quoting again:

> *"It is politically unacceptable to have the robber and his victim agree to share before the victim has vindicated his right of possession."*

Sobukwe believed that entering into alliances with Whites would do irreparable harm to the African cause because of the power disparities between Whites and Blacks. Africans had to bootstrap to assert their freedom and self-worth; and to take back what had been stolen.

The Africanists' absolute focus on African organization may seem to be racist, but Sobukwe and his colleagues were classic one-person-one-vote democrats. Sobukwe is famous for saying that there are no groups, only individuals; and that there is only one race, the human race. According to Sobukwe, anyone who accepted the outcome of a one-person-one-vote election in South Africa was African, irrespective of the colour of their skin. It was the Africanists who brought intellectual rigour to the word "non-racial."

The majority in the ANC did not agree with the Africanists. The ANC ratified the Freedom Charter at its congress in April 1956.

J.G. Strijdom had, by then, succeeded Malan as South Africa's prime minister. His government responded to the formation of the Congress with more repression: on 5 December 1956, it arrested one hundred and fifty-six Congress leaders and charged them with high treason. It

based the charges on the Freedom Charter. The government argued that the Charter's provisions would require a revolution because they required the abolition of apartheid; and it should be self-evident to anyone with common sense, that there would have to be a revolution for apartheid to be abolished. Apartheid, it was saying, would not go peacefully!

Over the next two years, most of the people arrested were let go, mainly because of the sheer legal incoherence of the charges. Among those freed were the ANC's President (Albert Luthuli) and Secretary General (Oliver Tambo). But the courts concluded that a case could be made against 30 leaders, including Sisulu and Mandela. Their trial lasted until 29 March 1961 when the State lost. In his judgment, Chief Justice Rumpff wrote:

> *"… it is impossible for this court to come to the conclusion that the African National Congress has acquired or adopted a policy to overthrow the state by violence…"*

In the interim, the government had continued its relentless rollout of apartheid legislation.

iv) The onward march of apartheid's grand plan

Laws after the 1952 Defiance Campaign:

> **Bantu Education Act (1953):** put a framework in place for government control over Black education. The curriculum was tailored to what White theorists decided were Black needs.

Comment: one should note that the Act led to new schools in remote areas that didn't have schools. As a result, many children who would not otherwise have been educated, received a basic education. But the curriculum had an ethnographic orientation based on European anthropological theories. Per capita spending on Black children was a fraction of what it was on Whites.

> **Reservation of Separate Amenities Act (1953):** formalised racial segregation in all public areas: separate queues, separate toilets, separate carriages in trains… and on and on.

> **Native Resettlement Act (1954):** enabled the forceful removal of Black South Africans from areas designated for Whites, irrespective of prior property ownership.

Strijdom's government invoked the Native Resettlement Act when it destroyed Sophiatown in 1955. Sophiatown had been established in 1903 as a suburb of Johannesburg. Blacks owned their homes. Early one morning, government officials arrived in numbers, loaded people onto trucks at gunpoint, and bulldozed their homes. Over 65,000 people were moved: Blacks to Meadowlands in the South Western Township (Soweto), Coloureds to Westbury, Indians to Lenasia, and Chinese to central Johannesburg.

Sophiatown was about 6.5 km from the Johannesburg city centre. Meadowlands was about 20 km away – the move tripled the daily commute to work. In a final insult, the government called the new White suburb "Triomf" (Triumph).

Native Urban Areas Act (1954): strengthened control over Blacks moving to the cities.

Senate Act (1955): packed South Africa's upper house (the Senate) with NP-appointed representatives. The new senators gave the government enough votes to achieve a two-thirds majority if it wanted to change the 1910 Union constitution.

Separate Representation of Voters Act (1956): removed Coloureds from the Cape voters' roll. The government used its new two-thirds majority to ram through this change to the Union constitution. When challenged in court, the courts decided in favour of the government.

Riotous Assemblies Act (1956): gave the Minister of Justice the power to ban open-air meetings if, in his/her judgment, they could lead to a disturbance of the peace.

1956 was the year in which South Africa's international isolation began: the International Table Tennis Federation became the first organization to sever ties with White South Africa.

H.F. Verwoerd became the leader of the NP in 1958 when Strijdom died. Though less harsh than before, his government continued to roll out apartheid legislation.

Extension of Universities Act (1959): forced students to study at a university that had been built for their race group. Students who were not White had to get special permission to enrol at South Africa's best universities.

The government built a new university for Coloureds in Cape Town (University of the Western Cape); for Indians in Durban (University of Durban-Westville); for Blacks in the Northern Transvaal (University of the North) – and so on.

Promotion of Self-government Act (1959): formalised the legal framework for the creation of self-governing Black territories. The Act was an important cornerstone in apartheid's grand plan.

Urban Bantu Councils Act (1961): offered Black communities in urban areas the opportunity to replace the advisory boards that had been established through the Native Urban Areas Act in 1923, with elected councils. But the councils had very limited powers.

The Urban Bantu Councils Act was an attempt to bring the government's urban policy closer to its "homelands" approach by offering limited Black self-government in urban areas. It was enabling legislation, that is, it was something that Black communities could choose to do if they wanted. Very few did because it reinforced apartheid's territorial plan in urban areas.

The NP was delivering exactly what White South Africans wanted. In 1958, the electorate returned the NP to power with 55% of the vote and 103 seats. The UP slipped to 53 seats. The Congress Alliance called for a national stayaway on the day of the election to highlight its injustice. The stayaway was poorly thought through and a failure.

v) The Sharpeville massacre and its aftermath

By the late 1950s, the ideological divides in the ANC had become irreconcilable. On 6 April 1959, Sobukwe, Zephania "Zeph" Mothopeng, and Potlako Leballo led a breakaway to form

the Pan Africanist Congress. Although former president Mda advised against breaking away, he went along. By the end of the year, the PAC claimed 24,000 members with strength in Orlando (Soweto), Cape Town, and Sharpeville.

PAC thinking harked back to the Africanism of the Youth League's first leaders, Lembede and Mda. It adopted the ANC's 1949 Programme of Action as policy. It was African socialist, democratic, and anti-communist. In its view, the communists' class-based analysis of Africa's problems was wrong. The problem in Africa was European theft and oppression. They derided South Africa's White communists for failing to make any headway among the White working class. The following passage about White involvement in the Congress Alliance comes from the PAC's manifesto (*The Africanist*, May 1959):

"Following the 'capture' of a portion of the black leadership by a section of the leadership of the white ruling class, the masses are in extreme danger of being deceived… This captured black leadership claims to be fighting for freedom when in truth it is fighting to perpetuate ***the tutelage*** *of the African people."*

The ANC had planned a nationwide, anti-pass protest for 31 March 1960. PAC strategists decided that they had to pre-empt the ANC. Having informed the police commissioner that it was going to happen, Sobukwe announced on 18 March that the PAC would hold a peaceful nationwide protest on 21 March. It was to be part of what Sobukwe called the "Status Campaign." By that he meant a sustained campaign to elevate how Africans felt about themselves. He wanted Africans to prove to themselves that they didn't need Whites to achieve freedom. The idea for the protest was simple: people would congregate in towns without their pass books and walk to the local police station where they would hand themselves in to be arrested. Their slogan was: "no bail, no defence, no fine" – in summary, get arrested and stay in jail. The jails would be overwhelmed; industry would grind to a halt.

In Sharpeville about 69 km outside Johannesburg, an estimated 5,000 to 10,000 people gathered without pass books in front of the local police station. The station was heavily protected by an armed but inexperienced police force. It is difficult to say how the shooting started – there was no command. But someone pulled the trigger. The rest is history. In 40 seconds, 69 people, including women and children, were killed. Some 180 were wounded.

The shooting is known as the Sharpeville massacre. It changed South Africa. The United Nations Security Council condemned the killing and blamed apartheid (Resolution 134). The General Assembly passed a motion to censure South Africa for violating the UN Charter – the first time in its history that it had censured a member country. If South Africa hadn't withdrawn from the British Commonwealth voluntarily, it would have been thrown out. Sharpeville was the true beginning of South Africa's international isolation. This was the year in which Chief Albert Luthuli won the Nobel Peace Prize.

Spontaneous protests and strikes broke out across the country. In Cape Town, 23-year-old Philip Kgosana, who had been planning a march from Langa to Cape Town, called it off. A

week later he led a disciplined and peaceful march of 30,000 people from Langa to Caledon Square in Cape Town. The police promised him a meeting with the Minister of Justice if he'd lead the crowd home. He did. When he returned for the promised meeting, he was arrested.

On the day of the Kgosana-led Langa march, the government declared a state of emergency. On 7 April it passed the **Unlawful Organizations Act (1960)**. The next day it banned the ANC and the PAC. In three weeks, it arrested 18,000 people. It took five months to calm things down. The state of emergency ended in August.

Sobukwe was arrested at the start of the campaign under the **Criminal Law Amendment Act** of 1953 (see above). The state charged him with inciting a protest and sentenced him to three years in prison. As his sentence was about to end, the government added an amendment to the law to include a clause that allowed the Minister of Justice to continue his detention indefinitely. The government transferred him to Robben Island and kept him in solitary confinement for six years. Unlike other political prisoners who arrived later, for instance, Mandela and Sisulu, he was not allowed to interact with anyone. The clause that the State used to detain him was never used on anyone else. It's known as the "Sobukwe clause."

In addition to the Unlawful Organizations Act, Verwoerd's government put an important piece of security legislation in place after Sharpeville:

> **Indemnity Act (1961):** gave the police and state officials immunity from prosecution for acts of violence, torture, or killing in the pursuit of state duties.

The government's response to Sharpeville played a significant role in persuading both the ANC and the PAC that change would not come to South Africa without an armed struggle. A week after the massacre, Oliver Tambo left South Africa to build an ANC organization outside the country. The ANC formally established a military wing, *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (Spear of the Nation, MK for short) at a secret meeting in Durban in June 1961. The PAC established its military wing, *Poqo* (Pure), at a meeting in Botswana in September.

In numerous talks and letters, most notably after the 11 September 2001 New York twin-tower attacks, South Africa's 2nd democratically elected president, Thabo Mbeki, has defined terrorism as the "wilful targeting of civilians." This is a good definition. The ANC had been deeply committed to peaceful protest. After a long argument, Luthuli and other committed pacifists relented; and agreed to the formation of MK as long as a) civilians were never targeted; and b) MK would be a separate organization from the ANC.

Nelson Mandela and Joe Slovo of the CP were mandated to build the organization. From the start, MK made a point of selecting targets that would avoid civilian casualties (for example, electrical pylons or railway lines or government buildings when they were empty). Its weapons were home-made bombs. The first attacks took place on 16 December 1961 – a symbolically important date because it was the day on which Afrikaners had defeated Zulus at the Battle of

Blood River in 1838. After the onset of the attacks, the government decided it needed more repressive legislation:

> **General Law Amendment Act (1962):** amended all of the previously repressive acts (Suppression of Communism, Riotous Assemblies, Unlawful Organizations, etc.) to make them more watertight. A lengthy section defined "sabotage." It became known as the "Sabotage" Act.

Without Sobukwe, Poqo was undisciplined and indiscriminate. Its plan was to create a nationwide network of secret military cells to overthrow White rule on an appointed day. Its most visible act was a march in Paarl (outside Cape Town) in 1962 when some 200 activists armed with basic weapons like axes and pangas, attacked the police station, homes and shops. Two White residents were killed. Mass arrests followed. According to South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 71 PAC members were executed in the course of trials that lasted the next five years. Eighteen were from Paarl.

Simmering rebellion continued through 1962 and 1963. When ANC leaders like Chris Hani or Harold Wolpe were caught, they would escape if they could and go into exile.

By this time the South African police had begun to create what became a formidable network of spies and informants. On 11 July 1963, they raided a farm outside Johannesburg called Liliesleaf. It turned out to be MK's internal base of operations. Almost all of MK's top structure was arrested. Mandela had already been caught. Their trial under the 1962 "Sabotage" act began on 3 December of 1963 in Rivonia. The government cited 193 acts of sabotage in its indictment, mostly harmless bombings. No civilians had been killed.

On 20 April 1964 before sentencing, Mandela made one of the great speeches of the 20th century in his defence. His closing lines are well-known, but they are still worth repeating:

> *"During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."*

The trial ended on 12 June 1964. Most of the accused were found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment. That same day, most were flown to prison on Robben Island. By this time B.J. Vorster was the prime minister. New repressive legislation followed:

> **Terrorism Act (1967):** allowed anyone suspected of involvement in (very broadly defined) "terrorism" to be detained secretly and indefinitely without trial on the authority of a policeman with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel or higher. There was no judicial oversight.

Black politics through the rest of the 1960s is mainly a story of subversion and repression that caused very little public turmoil. Leaders ended up banned, detained, in exile, or dead.

The first death in detention was that of an activist called Looksmart Ngudle in September 1963. The Security Police reported that he'd committed suicide. There was no investigation.

It would become a familiar pattern. Estimates put the total number of people who died in detention by "suicide" or "accidentally" at about 80 (including Steve Biko in 1977). One must remember that the Security Police were protected by the **Indemnity Act** of 1961.

In effect, with the help of all-encompassing security legislation, South Africa's security forces just about shut down organized resistance in South Africa. But South Africa's international isolation intensified – and the first cracks started to appear in the Afrikaner monolith.

In a speech to the youth congress of an Afrikaner think tank in 1966, a lecturer at the University of Potchefstroom called Willem de Klerk described what he called three types of Afrikaner: "verkrampte" (cramped, conservative), "verligte" (enlightened), and "positiewe" (positive). He described verkramptes in unflattering terms as rigidly committed to a Calvinist Afrikaner identity and racial segregation. Verligtes were more racially progressive. But his ideal was the "positive" Afrikaner who balanced tradition with the need for progress. De Klerk had an immaculate Afrikaner pedigree. His father was a prominent NP politician. An uncle by marriage had been the former prime minister, J.G. Strijdom.

De Klerk's speech caused a storm. In the resulting public debate, the three-fold distinction collapsed into two. Henceforth, establishment Afrikaners would be referred to as "verlig" or "verkramp." Verligtes stood for reforming or repealing apartheid in varying degrees. Verkramptes stood for rigid adherence to the 1948 manifesto. De Klerk was an early advocate for scrapping aspects of apartheid like the Immorality Act. He was "verlig."

Under Vorster, the NP pursued a policy that combined ruthless oppression with minuscule reforms like allowing mixed-race visiting international sports teams. This was too much for the verkramptes. In 1969 a "verkramp" cabinet minister called Albert Hertzog attacked his own government for drifting away from apartheid. The NP expelled him and he promptly formed the **Herstigte Nasionale Party** (Re-established National Party). Three NP parliamentarians joined him to give the HNP four members in parliament.

The ANC, meanwhile, decided that it needed a strategic review given the state's crackdown. It spelled out a new strategy in a document called "Strategy and Tactics" (1969):

> South Africa was conquered by force and is today ruled by force. At moments when white autocracy feels itself threatened, it does not hesitate to use the gun.
>
> The Coloured and Indian people have shown that they form part of the sweep towards liberation, for example, the mass acts led by that outstanding son of the Indian people – Mahatma Gandhi.
>
> The response of the authorities (to the Defiance Campaign, Congress of the People, and Sharpeville) was such that the overwhelming majority of the people learnt that the privileges of the minority will only be wrenched from it by **armed combat**.
>
> The general strike as a method of political mobilization was suppressed with the utmost vigour and by the end of the fifties could no longer be effectively employed as an instrument of mass struggle. Other protests were increasingly broken by police brutality…

> Legal opposition was rendered ineffective by banning, exiling and the imprisoning of activists and leaders to long terms for the most trivial infringements… by such laws as the Terrorism and Sabotage Acts all opposition by legal or peaceful means was rendered impossible.
>
> Winning our freedom by armed struggle – the only method left open to us – demands an understanding and implementation of revolutionary theory and techniques in the actual conditions facing us.

"Strategy and Tactics" explained why the ANC decided to resort to armed struggle. It spelled out what a guerrilla war would entail; but maintained a commitment to avoiding civilian casualties.

vi) The 1970s: Black Consciousness, the Soweto Uprising, Afrikaner doubts

The government kicked off the 1970s by passing legislation that laid the groundwork for the independence of Black territories:

> **Bantu Homelands Citizenship Act (1970)/Bantu Homelands Constitution Act (1971):** the first assigned every Black South African to citizenship in one of the Black territories, even if they weren't born there and had never been there.
>
> The second empowered the South African government to grant "independence" to any Black territory that wanted to be declared a country. This gave the government the opportunity to **co-opt Black territorial leaders** with a promise of independence.

Attempts to mash South Africa into an apartheid shape continued. Forced removals peaked in the 1970s. The Surplus People's Project (1983) has calculated that about 3.5 million Black + Coloured + Indian South Africans were forcibly moved between 1960 and 1983. Between 1971 and 1974 alone, some 400,000 Black South Africans were forcibly moved from their homes on Mission settlements and White farms – and sometimes just dumped on barren and completely undeveloped land. By that time, mechanisation was enabling farming with much less labour.

In the meantime, a new resistance network called the **Black Consciousness Movement** was taking shape to fill the space left by the banned ANC and PAC. Its most prominent spokesperson was Steve Biko. In 1966, Biko had been given permission to study medicine at the University of Natal. He'd joined the non-racial National Union of South African Students. But he'd become frustrated by what he experienced as its White dominated, paternalistic liberalism. In 1968 along with student leaders like Barney Pityana at Fort Hare, he helped to found the Black/Coloured/Indian-only **South African Students Organization**. That same year, Black students at Diepkloof Secondary School in Soweto established a high-school counterpart called the **African Students Movement**.

In 1972, Biko and his colleagues established the **Black People's Convention** to take Black Consciousness out of the universities. It became an umbrella body to coordinate all Black Consciousness inspired activity – from running health clinics and organizing financial management and literacy classes, to publishing educational and political literature. The ASM

renamed itself the **South African Students' Movement** and extended its organization to schools outside Soweto. The BPC's political program was non-violent.

Biko's intellectual ancestors were the ANC's Africanists: Lembede, Mda, Sobukwe. He was also deeply influenced by the French West Indian, anti-colonial psychiatrist, Frantz Fanon. In 1971 he set out his thinking in a paper that he delivered at UCT's Abe Bailey Institute of Inter-Racial Studies. It was called "White Racism and Black Consciousness" (see I Write What I Like, 2017):

> *"The White man's quest for power has led him to destroy with utter ruthlessness whatever has stood in his way… Progressives* (that is, the liberal opposition Progressive Party) *have always been a White party… fighting for a way of preserving White values in this southern tip of Africa…"*

Biko's critique included South Africa's White communists. The ANC's non-Africanists had criticized Sobukwe for arguing that Black freedom required Black organization. They'd argued that anyone who claimed that "there is only one race – the human race" (like Sobukwe) couldn't logically belong to an exclusively Black organization. As far as Biko was concerned, listening to these people had been "the biggest mistake the Black world ever made." Taking a lead from Fanon, he argued that the greatest damage that colonial oppression had done, was the damage to Black people's self-esteem and self-confidence. "Because of their inferiority complex," he said, "Blacks have tended to listen to what the liberals had to say." In Biko's view, Sobukwe had been right: only Black South Africans could free themselves. It's why Sobukwe had called the PAC's 1960 campaign a "Status" campaign, not a protest or defiance campaign.

Biko believed in the strategic importance of Black unity. For that reason, he established relations with key members of all existing organizations (ANC, PAC) even though he was critical of the ANC's coalitions. White liberals did have a role to play, he argued, but mainly to work among Whites to change White political attitudes.

In 1973, wildcat strikes hit South Africa yet again in multiple industries: brick works, clothing, iron and steel, transport, shipping, municipal services, chemicals, construction. The strikes were notable for a sophisticated organizational network that had no visible leaders – strikers had learnt by then that electing leaders gave the State a target. In contrast to past strikes, these strikes drew White and even government sympathy because the terms of employment were so appalling. Police acted with restraint and industries were forced to negotiate better wages.

The 1973 strikes were a turning point in Black + Coloured + Indian trade unionism. By 1977 they had created so much pressure that Vorster's government appointed a commission to investigate Black labour law. By the time the commission reported back in 1979, P.W. Botha had replaced Vorster as prime minister (see below). Botha's government enacted substantive labour relations reform when it followed through on the commission's recommendations:

Industrial Conciliation Amendment Act (June 1979): the original act had been passed in 1923 to regulate White labour relations. This act brought Black/Coloured/Indian trade unions into the labour relations framework. It legalized strikes and collective bargaining for all races.

In 1979 the various unions that had formed as a result of the 1973 strikes combined to form South Africa's biggest non-racial trade union federation: **Federation of South African Trade Unions** with 45,000 members. By 1981 it had 120,000 members. Trade unions used the legal space created by the 1979 Act to become a potent force in the struggle against apartheid.

On the political front, the government had started to harass **Black People's Convention** leaders when it became clear that their ultimate program was to get rid of apartheid. In 1973, Biko was banned. And in 1974 when the BPC organized rallies in support of Mozambique's independence (against the strategic advice of Biko), some 200 activists were arrested and sent to Robben Island. Nine were tried under South Africa's Terrorism Act.

That didn't stop resistance. South Africa was about to explode – yet again.

In 1976, the South African government tried to force Black children to learn in Afrikaans. For Black school pupils who were already highly critical of the quality of their education, this was the last straw. The well-networked Soweto Students' Representative Council decided to organize a protest. It set 16 June 1976 as the date. About 20,000 pupils turned out. The government responded with wild, irrational violence. We can't be sure of how many school children were shot and killed on the first day. The government-appointed Cillie Commission concluded 23. Others have put the number as high as 150+. Riots erupted across the country. A government crack-down followed. In a familiar pattern, all Black Consciousness organizations were banned. Biko was arrested on 18 August 1977 and killed by violent interrogation. And a new generation of young Black activists ended up in prison or in exile. The ANC had the best-resourced infrastructure outside South Africa. Thousands of young Black activists joined the ANC in exile.

After the Soweto Uprising the UN Security Council passed a mandatory arms embargo on South Africa (Resolution 418). South Africa's isolation intensified.

vii) The closing years of the decade

NP power peaked in 1977. It got 65% of the vote and 134 seats in the 165-seat parliament. It seemed to be in complete control. The UP had split into fragments and no longer existed. The Progressive Party, a breakaway from the UP dating back to 1959, had combined with two UP fragments, first to form the Progressive Reform Party in 1975; and then the **Progressive Federal Party** in 1977. The PFP became the official opposition with 17% of the vote. It was the only party that stood for dissolving parliament and negotiating a new constitution.

Wynand Malan was the first of the future leaders of the **National Democratic Movement** to get elected to parliament. In 1977 he contested a mostly English-speaking constituency called

Randburg outside Johannesburg on behalf of the NP. The seat had been held by the UP and its remnants. Malan won. He was considered "verlig."

Hertzog's verkramptes got 3% of the vote and lost their seats.

In 1977 the government offered new legislation in the urban areas to bring Black local government in line with its Black territories approach:

> **Community Councils Act (1977):** replaced the 1961 Urban Bantu Councils Act. Democratically elected councils could be established with powers resembling those of a municipality.
>
> As with the "Homelands" legislation, this legislation opened a path to **the co-option of Black leaders in urban areas** through government patronage.

It was a significant departure from D.F. Malan's 1948 manifesto that stated that Blacks would never have political rights outside the Black territories. But it was still apartheid.

P.W. Botha replaced Vorster as the NP's leader in 1978. Botha introduced the words "total onslaught" and "total strategy" to South Africa's political vernacular. According to Botha, the country was facing a "total onslaught" from liberation movements and their international allies. What was needed was a "total strategy." The outlines of that strategy were becoming clear: a) ruthless oppression using security laws and the security forces; and b) patronage and co-option through controlled forms of self-government in Black territories and urban areas (Bantu Homelands Constitution Act, Community Councils Act).

By 1978 the government had managed to persuade two Black territories to opt for nominal independence: Transkei (1976) and Bophuthatswana (1977). Venda joined them in 1979. They had their own flags, identity documents, postage stamps, and passports. But if you were a citizen and you tried to use their passports, the only country to which you could travel was South Africa. The international community did not recognize them and they were economically unviable. Their independence did very little to stop the migration of Black South Africans to the cities. By about 1980, more Black South Africans lived in and around what were supposed to be White cities than in what were supposed to be their "homelands."

In 1979 Botha introduced more NP vernacular to the South African political scene: "adapt or die." In a speech aimed as much at his own supporters as anyone else, he warned White South Africans that the country would have to "adapt or die" to confront the "total onslaught." But Botha, as we'll see, was incapable of giving up apartheid. He was a security hawk who modified apartheid policy in a kind of tactical way to adapt to the increasingly hostile environment that South Africa was facing.

viii) Strategic reassessments by Afrikaners and the ANC

The ANC had leaned into armed struggle in its 1969 "Strategy and Tactics" document. By 1978 it had intensified its military activity with the help of activists who'd joined post-Soweto. But

it was a long way from achieving successful insurrection. In 1978, Tambo led a team on a study tour to Vietnam. There they were told that the ANC needed a more comprehensive strategy. The result was the **Green Book** (1979):

> The character of the South African ruling class and the nature of its state apparatus dictates that national liberation and people's power **can only be won by revolutionary violence** in a protracted armed struggle…
>
> **But:**
>
> At the present moment… the main task is to concentrate on political mobilisation and organization so as to build up political revolutionary bases… In as much as the armed struggle depends on the rate of advance of the political struggle, the **armed struggle is secondary** at this time.
>
> **And:**
>
> We must bring about the broadest possible unity of all national groups, classes and strata… we must combine illegal with legal and semi-legal activity… We must **not mechanically reject** all participation in government created bodies…

Summary: our current focus needs to be revolutionary political mass mobilization. This may include tactical participation in apartheid structures. Violence will eventually be needed to get rid of the regime.

In the meantime, significant cracks continued to develop in the Afrikaner establishment. On the one hand, Botha's changes to the apartheid framework created an increasing number of verkramptes who believed that the NP was drifting too far from its original plan. On the other, strong voices for change were beginning to emerge on the "verligte" side. There had always been Afrikaners like Beyers Naude who spoke out against apartheid. What was different, was that the people asking the questions were well-regarded insiders.

Among them was a high-profile philosophy professor at the University of Stellenbosch called Willie Esterhuyse. This is what he had to say about Transkei's independence when he wrote a guest essay for *Die Burger* (the Cape's biggest circulation Afrikaans newspaper) on 25 May 1976:

> *"With the best will in the world, this writer can't see how black leadership groups can identify with or feel patriotic about the **scattered rags of territory** that are ultimately supposed to be their homes."*

And on 24 December 1978 he wrote this in *Rapport* (one of the biggest Afrikaans Sunday newspapers)**:**

> *"As Afrikaners we must accept that safeguarding our identity shouldn't be the be-all and end-all of our existence in this country. The only goal for which we can live, that is to say, if we are sincere in our claims to be Christians, is the maintenance and propagation of our Christian values."*

In 1979 he would go on to publish a book of essays questioning apartheid called **Afskeid van Apartheid** (Farewell to Apartheid). The ideological fissures in the Afrikaner establishment were bigger than any that existed in the ANC and its alliance partners.

And that brings us to the 1980s when the people who would go on to found the **National Democratic Movement** became high profile in South African politics. This is where our bare-bones introduction to the first 70 years of South Africa's political history, ends.

***

Section 2

The Irresistible Pressure for Change

History isn't digital. So why choose 1980 to start the second section of this book?

Mainly because it was about then that most White South Africans realized that the country needed to change course. Aside from a positive economic bump caused by the spike in the gold price in 1980 and 1981, South Africa wasn't doing well. And once the gold rush was over, the economy started a downhill slide. The country was hard to govern, subversive activity was increasing, and international isolation was intensifying.

In the meantime, the ANC was digging in for what it thought would still be a long struggle. And the NP was edging slowly towards changes that, it argued, broadened democracy, but enabled the White parliament to retain overall control.

So, 1980 is the year. You'll find the story of the **National Democratic Movement** in this decade.

Glossary for Chapter 3: South Africans Cross Political Lines to Talk to Each Other

Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress (1912 to the present – name changed to ANC in 1923).
AZAPO	Azanian People's Organization. Founded in 1978 as a successor to the banned BPC.
APLA	Azanian People's Liberation Army – military wing of AZAPO.
BPC	Black People's Convention – a successor to the banned PAC. Founded in 1972, banned in 1977.
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions (1985 to the present).
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party. Founded by Mangosuthu Buthelezi in 1975. Mainly for Zulus.
KP	Konserwatiewe (Conservative) Party (1982-2004).
NDM	National Democratic Movement (1987-1989).
NIS	National Intelligence Service.
NP	National Party (1914 – 1934; 1951 – 1998).
NRP	New Republic Party (1977-1989).
PFP	Progressive Federal Party (1977-1989).
SAIC	South African Indian Congress (1921 – became dormant in the 1970s).
SADF	South African Defence Force.
UCT	University of Cape Town.
UDF	United Democratic Front (1983 – effectively banned in 1988).
UP	United Party (1934 – 1977). Renamed the New Republic Party in 1977.

Broederbond (Brotherhood): founded in 1918 as a secretive society for male Afrikaners to promote Afrikaner cultural, political, and economic interests. It became extremely influential.

New Republic Party: the NRP was the last remnant of the Hertzog-Smuts United Party. The UP had been formed during the Great Depression. It lost the 1948 election to the NP and never regained power. It experienced defections during the 1960s and 70s, mostly because it was too conservative. Those who were left in 1977 renamed it the New Republic Party.

Tricameral parliament: Botha's constitutional reforms led to a parliament with three chambers – hence 'Tricameral.' Whites sat in what was called the House of Assembly. Coloureds and Indians sat in the Houses of Representatives and Delegates respectively.

Chapter 3
South Africans Cross Political Lines to Talk to Each Other

White voters were beginning to splinter in all directions by 1980. On the one hand, purist Afrikaners remained committed to preserving their culture and community by sticking to a rigid policy of segregation. On the other, many "inner-circle" verligtes had concluded that the system was neither sustainable nor just. As for the English – the United Party, for whom most had voted in 1948, had disintegrated.

Three factors stood out when it came to apartheid's vulnerability:

- The sheer will of people not to be constrained by oppressive laws; and the sheer scale and violence of the security apparatus that was needed to enforce the laws;
- The ANC's increasingly successful international diplomacy and intensifying calls for South Africa's political and economic isolation (including sanctions);
- The economic and social costs of patronage to Black territories, underinvestment in Black education, influx control, and the migrant labour system.

So, the White story of the 1980s is a story of political fragmentation under pressure.

But the "whole South Africa" story, is about a sophisticated web of interactions that developed as South Africans decided that they'd better start talking to each other. That's what this chapter is about. We begin with a point-form history of the first three years of the decade.

i) A brief summary of some relevant events in the early 1980s

1980 21 February: the South African government warned Mozambique that it wouldn't hesitate to attack ANC military bases in Mozambique.

1 June: successful ANC attack on Sasolburg oil refinery. Spectacular fires. The O'Malley archive lists 17 sabotage events for the year.

13 June: Security Council Resolution 473 condemned South Africa's apartheid repression. Called for the release of political prisoners and the elimination of apartheid. Adopted unanimously.

28 November: at a ceremony in Geneva to receive the Nehru Award on behalf of Mandela, Oliver Tambo reaffirmed the ANC's commitment to the Geneva Convention. No civilian targets.

1981 30 January: the South African Defence Force raided Matola, an ANC base in Mozambique. Two SADF soldiers were killed. Twelve ANC operatives were killed.

4 November: South African Indian Council elections. Turnout was **10.5%**. The SAIC was the apartheid institution for Indians. Election boycotts were a way to prove its illegitimacy.

4 December: the Ciskei became the fourth Black territory (of ten) whose leaders opted for nominal independence.

1981 was marked by increasing sabotage (40 attacks according to the O'Malley archive), political arrests (630), bannings (20); and by the extra-judicial killing by government operatives of anti-apartheid activists like Griffiths Mxenge.

There was a White election in 1981. P.W. Botha's NP won easily (131 seats in the 177-seat parliament), but with a falling share of the vote: 58% – down from 65% in 1977.

Under the new leadership of Frederik van Zyl Slabbert, the PFP increased its share to 20% and won 26 seats. The New Republic Party (the last remnant of the United Party) managed to get 8 seats with 7% of the vote. But the total "progressive" vote (if one can call it that) fell from 31% (1977) to 27% (1981).

The big winners were Afrikaner purists even though they didn't win any seats because of the first-past-the-post system. Their vote share increased from 3% (1977) to 14%. Net: falling support for the NP and progressives; increasing support for purist Afrikaners.

Two future leaders of the National Democratic Movement became members of parliament in 1981, Peter Gastrow and Pierre Cronje. Gastrow had joined the PFP soon after its formation in 1977. That year, the party asked him to stand for election to the provincial legislature in Natal in Durban North. His opponent was a member of the NRP. Gastrow recalls that he was thrashed. But he'd paid his dues. In 1981 he became his party's nominee for the Durban Central constituency and won. Cronje had joined the Progressive Party in Natal in the early 1970s before it became the Progressive Reform Party in 1975 and the PFP in 1977. He was an engineer and roadbuilder who couldn't live with the fact that he was building expensive roads for White holiday makers while Black people "over the hill" had to deal with dirt tracks and mud that made their lives impossibly difficult. He was the surprise winner for the PFP in the Greytown constituency in 1981.

Future NDM leader, Wynand Malan, retained his seat for the NP in Randburg. His opponent was the PFP's Pieter Schoeman – another future leader of the NDM.

1982 8 January: at a ceremony to mark the ANC's 70th anniversary, Oliver Tambo announced that 1982 would be a year of mass mobilization on multiple fronts (per the ANC's **Green Book**).

31 March: Mandela and others were moved from Robben Island to Pollsmoor prison. The move was the first step to creating a setting in which talks with Mandela could begin.

SA security force activity continued: ANC offices were bombed in London (14 March); Ruth First was killed by a parcel bomb in Mozambique (17 August); 12 ANC operatives were killed in an SADF raid in Lesotho (9 December).

1983 20 May: a car bomb exploded outside South Africa's air-force HQ in Pretoria, killing 17 and injuring 200. The ANC claimed responsibility. The ANC said it was a legitimate military target.

23 May: the SADF conducted a bombing raid on ANC targets in Mozambique. Six killed. More raids on 17 October.

Botha had established a committee to look at constitutional change soon after his election as NP leader. Among the committee's proposals were: first, the establishment of democratically elected Black urban councils; and second, a power-sharing concept for Coloureds and Indians

based on each one having an elected parliament. These were attempts to fashion democratically elected leaders for Coloureds and Indians and urban Blacks.

The Coloured and Indian elections would lead to three Houses of Parliament (the so-called Tricameral parliament). The House of Assembly was for Whites. Coloureds had the House of Representatives. Indians had the House of Delegates. Each of the races would legislate in their chambers on what were called "own affairs," that is to say, on issues deemed to relate specifically **to their communities/geographical areas** like schooling and housing. The three would then legislate jointly on what were called "general affairs," that is, issues relevant to everyone like national defence and the overall budget. It was sold as power-sharing – except that it wasn't: Whites dominated because the size of the Houses was a function of population size and there were more Whites at the time than Coloureds and Indians combined. The South Africa Constitution Act to ratify the new constitution passed on 22 September 1983.

In the meantime, anti-apartheid organizations were mobilizing to resist the NP's constitutional moves. On 20 August, some 500 anti-apartheid organizations met in Mitchell's Plain outside Cape Town to form a non-racial umbrella movement called the **United Democratic Front**. Key speakers included the ANC Women's League (Frances Baard), Church leaders (Frank Chikane, Allen Boesak), a KwaZulu-Natal ANC activist (Archie Gumede), a trade unionist (Oscar Mpetha), a member of the Muslim Judicial Council (Sheikh Gabier), and long-standing anti-apartheid activist, Helen Joseph. Gumede was elected UDF president.

1983 (3 December): Black local authority elections took place in and around Soweto. **Turnout was very low** (for instance, 11% in Soweto). As a result, the elected councillors had no credibility.

1983 (15 December): a bomb exploded outside the Johannesburg offices of the Dept of Foreign Affairs. It was the 42nd act of sabotage claimed by the ANC in 1983. No civilians were killed.

1983 was also the year in which an Afrikaner organization called the Broederbond (Brotherhood) began to circulate confidential documents about ending apartheid. At the time, it was the most influential Afrikaner organization in South Africa. Not many people knew that establishment Afrikaners were subjecting apartheid to such intense scrutiny.

ii) In 1984 and 1985 South Africa blew up

A short summary of 1984 and 1985 would be: South Africa blew up. Let's begin with a point-form overview of the first eight months of 1984.

1984 6 January: Security Council Resolution 546 demanded that South Africa withdraw from Angola. France supported the resolution. The USA and the UK abstained.

8 January: in its annual statement, the ANC called for a **People's War** based on mass mobilization (protests, strikes), underground military activity, and international isolation.

13 January: Security Council Resolution 547 demanded that the SA govt commute the death sentence of ANC activist Malesela Moloise. Adopted unanimously. He was executed in 1985.

1 March: in a letter to Kaiser Matanzima of the Transkei, Mandela rejected an **offer of freedom** on condition that he live in the Transkei and become a Transkei citizen.

16 March: under pressure from South Africa, Mozambique signed a non-aggression pact. Mozambique agreed to limit the number of ANC representatives in Mozambique to 10.

17 August: the UN Security Council passed Resolution 554 **condemning** the new **Tricameral Constitution**. France voted for condemnation. The UK and the USA abstained.

22 August: first elections for the Houses of Representatives (Coloureds) and Delegates (Indians). The **low turnouts**: 18% and 23% respectively; called the legitimacy of the Houses into question.

In the meantime, the newly elected Black councils in an area called the Vaal Triangle south of Johannesburg had decided to increase the rent on state housing. In response, a UDF affiliate called the **Vaal Civic Association** organized a peaceful protest against the increases. The VCA spent most of August planning and communicating. On 2 September they announced that the protest should begin the next day. On 3 September, thousands of residents started walking from various points in the suburbs towards the municipal offices.

The day turned violent. Protestors set fire to buildings, threw bricks and petrol bombs at the police, and attacked newly elected town councillors. The police responded with tear-gas and rubber bullets at first; and then live ammunition. In Sharpeville protesters hacked the Black deputy mayor to death, dumped him in his car and set it alight. Protests continued overnight and into the next day; then spread, in similar fashion, across the country. 3 September 1984 was the most violent day of civic unrest since Soweto in 1976.

Both the UDF and the ANC seem to have been caught off guard by the sheer scale and violence of the protests. The government blamed the UDF. But historians believe that small informal groups of extremely angry young militants who were unknown to the UDF or the ANC or the police, were probably responsible. On 6 October the government called in the army. The first deployment of troops was into a town outside Grahamstown in the Cape. The next day troops were deployed in Sharpeville. Somewhat opportunistically, the ANC in exile got on board. Radio Freedom declared (to quote): "*There is no way out for the Botha regime… Botha's guns and batons are failing*."

South Africa's security infrastructure was not about to fail, but it was unusually stressed. On 23 October the government launched the biggest police crack-down in South African history. It cordoned off towns in the Vaal area and conducted some 19,500 house-to-house searches affecting more than 200,000 people. It was essentially **an exercise in mass intimidation**. This became a familiar pattern across the country: protests would flare up, the security forces would move in, the area would calm down, the forces would withdraw – and the protests would flare up again. Thousands of people were arrested. On 5-6 November, civic organizations called for a work stayaway. 800,000 people complied.

A new element in the Vaal Uprising was the extent to which protesters targeted Black South Africans and structures associated with apartheid. Activists attacked beer halls, council

offices, and the homes of Black councillors and policemen. In the Vaal, the government had to relocate Black councillors for their safety. Across the country, newly elected Black councillors resigned en masse. AZAPO claimed to have killed ten Black policemen in Soweto. There were school boycotts. People stopped paying rent. In many places, municipal services collapsed. Parts of the country became visibly ungovernable.

In the self-governing Black territory of KwaZulu, the governing **Inkatha Freedom Party** led by Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, fought back. Buthelezi had risen to prominence as a young Black leader in the 1970s. He'd opted into the self-governing structure of KwaZulu, but spurned the government's offer of independence. When the fighting broke out, the South African Defence Force stepped in with covert support for the IFP. The fight between the UDF and the IFP became a civil war. It spread into the Johannesburg area among migrant workers.

Towards the end of 1984, in a small sign of movement towards talks, the government started allowing people to visit Nelson Mandela in jail. 1984 was also the year in which an academic from the University of Cape Town with good connections to establishment Afrikaners, H.W. van der Merwe, tried to arrange talks between members of the Afrikaner inner-circle and the ANC in exile (see below).

We come now to 1985. Botha opened parliament in January with an important statement of intent. He noted that the NP's attempt to limit Blacks to citizenship in the Black territories had failed. He offered to release Mandela on condition that the latter renounced violence. Mandela rejected the offer. Botha repeated the offer in February along with an offer to talk to the ANC as long as it **renounced the armed struggle**. Both rejected the offer.

The government's admission that influx control had failed was an important departure from decades of policy. Later in the year the government repealed the Mixed Marriages and Immorality Acts; and the law against the formation of non-racial political parties. To most White South Africans, these were radical reforms – so much so that the newly formed Konserwatiewe Party (Conservative Party) started attracting an increasing number of purist Afrikaner voters. Yet the government's constitutional changes remained fundamentally racial: Black urban councils in Black areas, tribal self-government in Black territories, the Tricameral parliament. Consistently low voter turnout continued to call the legitimacy of the elected leaders and structures into question.

Ruthless repression accompanied these changes. On the day that Botha offered to talk to the ANC, the police arrested 13 prominent UDF organizers. Just over a month later, when 4,000 people in Uitenhage organized a peaceful march to commemorate the Sharpeville massacre, police opened fire and killed between 20 and 35 people. That same month, Botha banned the UDF and 28 other organizations from holding meetings in 18 magisterial districts. As a result, funerals became a venue for mass rallies: in April, some 80,000 people rallied at the funeral of the Uitenhage victims.

In May 1985, the ANC ramped up its calls to make South Africa ungovernable. Broadcasting from exile on Radio Freedom, Thabo Mbeki announced that the ANC would continue to "attack on all fronts in a united and coordinated political and military offensive." But the state continued its violent security response. Extra-judicial assassinations by security operatives intensified: three people called the PEPCO 3 were killed in May; and four (the Cradock Four) in June. Also in June, the SADF killed 12-15 people in a cross-border raid into Botswana.

Finally, on 20 July, Botha declared a state of emergency in 36 magisterial districts. It would not be wrong to describe government in these districts as government by the security forces. Under the regulations:

- Any policemen could detain anyone deemed to be a security threat **on the spot**. Detainees could be kept in **total seclusion**: no lawyers, no visitors; nothing to read except the Bible.
- Security forces were **indemnified against illegal acts** committed in the course of their duties (raiding offices or homes without warrants, killing protesters, violent interrogation).
- There was **a total information blackout**: no-one was allowed to report on any information about security activity without permission from the Minister of Law and Order.
- The Minister of Law and Order had the power to **ban at will**, people and organizations deemed to be a "threat to the peace."

In August, a coalition of anti-apartheid organizations published a short pamphlet on state-sponsored hit squads. They noted that 27 UDF activists had disappeared without trace; and that there had been at least 11 political assassinations. The press exposed at least two state-sponsored hit squads with lists to kill 20 activists. Prominent Afrikaner dissident, Beyers Naude, noted that it would only be a matter of time before what was happening in Black communities would "spill over into the white community" (Gerhart and Glaser, 2010, p. 266). And indeed, in 1987 the **Azanian People's Liberation Army** (a descendant of the PAC's Poqo) issued a pamphlet in which they called for "One Racist, One Bullet," that is, for a White person to be killed every time a Black person was killed (Gerhart and Glaser, 2010, p. 623).

More than 7,000 people were arrested and 500 people killed in the first six months of the state of emergency. Most were killed by the police. Against this backdrop Botha gave his Rubicon speech.

1985 (15 August): Excerpts from P.W. Botha's speech to the Natal Congress of the NP
Botha called the speech his manifesto. The world called it the Rubicon speech

"During recent months… I have received a great deal of advice. Most of the media in South Africa have already informed you what I was going to say… Of all the tragedies in the world I think the greatest is that our electorate refrained so far to elect some of these gentlemen… They have all the answers…

"During recent weeks there was an unparalleled scurry to prescribe what is to be announced… It was envisaged that people are going to be dissatisfied if certain things are not announced… It is a well-known tactic in negotiations to limit the other person's freedom of movement (in this way).

"I find it unacceptable to be confronted in this manner. (It) *is not my way of doing and the sooner these gentlemen accept it, the better."*

Having made it clear that he was not going to be railroaded into making changes, Botha turned to South Africa:

"… the (National) *Party stands for the just and equal treatment of all parts of South Africa, and for the impartial maintenance of the rights and privileges of every section of the population…*

*"We cannot ignore the fact that this is a multicultural society – **a country of minorities** – White as well as Black… the National Party respects the multicultural and poly-ethnic nature of South Africa's population… it rejects any system which amounts to one nation or group dominating others.*

*"In this regard we already co-operate in various ways through **multi-national ministerial committees**, meeting from time to time and working positively in the interest of South Africa as a whole."*

Note "*a country of minorities*." This was the bedrock of both Botha's and many Whites' thinking. South Africa was a country of communities and nations and tribes. Botha asserted that the NP stood for the "*just and equal treatment*" of each one.

Note also "*multi-national ministerial committees*." This was his vision. **Each ethnic community was a nation**. Each should have its elected representatives and ministries. The "*multi-national ministerial committees*" were structures for governance by these democratically elected representatives. The three components of this structure were supposed to be the self-governing Black territories, the Tricameral parliament, and elected Black local councils.

"Many of the perceptions of the South African situation overseas are erroneous. People are flocking to South Africa from neighbouring countries because they are looking for work and health services… 90% of the exports of Southern Africa takes place through the transport systems of the Republic of South Africa.

"We and our neighbours will have to find solutions for our fast-growing populations… We have our responsibilities in connection with proper family planning, health services, the provision of clean and fresh water, training of young people and the creation of work opportunities.

*"We have such a vast task ahead of us and such great challenges to create a better future, that we can ill afford the destructive actions of **barbaric Communist agitators** and even murderers…"*

So: as proof that White government was working, Botha talked about the extent to which Black Africans were coming to South Africa for health care and jobs.

Botha then went on to talk about "*barbaric Communist agitators*" and "*their masters*" as a contrast to his government. He believed that the ANC and its surrogate, the UDF, were anti-democratic. His belief was reinforced by what he saw happening in Black towns. By August there was violence from all sides. The IFP, as we've seen, was at war with the ANC; and across the country there were clashes between the ANC and AZAPO.

One of the more horrifying forms that the violence took was necklacing. This involved putting a tire over a person so that they couldn't move, dousing them in petrol, and setting them alight. According to South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the first person to be necklaced was Maki Skosana on 20 July 1985. She'd been accused of being a police informer. Her death had been filmed and broadcast on national television. Botha's Rubicon words would have resonated among his supporters of all races. Many would have taken Mandela's refusal to renounce the armed struggle as proof that he supported this kind of violence.

*"On the question of influx control – I can only say that **the present system is outdated and too costly**… the acceptance of the permanence of Black communities in urban areas means that a solution will have to be found for their legitimate rights.*

*"… any future constitutional dispensation should be negotiated… it would be wrong to be prescriptive as to structures. It will not be possible to accommodate the political aspirations of our various population groups in a **known political system**, because our problems are unique.*

"… (the) *independence of Black people* (within their own states) *represents a material part of the solution* (but) *independence cannot be forced upon any community. Should any of the Black States not accept independence* (they) *will remain a part of South Africa.*

*"I know for a fact that most leaders and reasonable South Africans will not accept the principle of one-man-one-vote in a unitary system. That would lead to domination of one over the other and it would lead to chaos. Consequently, **I reject it as a solution**.*

"How do we build a better future out of (different) *cultures, values, languages in our heterogeneous society? We believe our great wealth of divergent population groups must speak to each other through their elected leaders, not self-appointed leaders."*

Botha argued that there was no off-the-shelf solution to South Africa's constitutional challenges because South Africa was "unique." What made it unique was its cultural and linguistic diversity. Solutions could only be worked out by negotiation with the elected leaders of these "divergent populations." It was impossible to predict what the solution would be, but it would not be "one-person-one-vote in a unitary system."

Like the recognition that urban Blacks were South African citizens, Botha's recognition that there may be Black territories that did not want independence was a big departure from apartheid's grand plan. But there were fundamental problems with his vision: how could he know who the country's elected leaders were, when so many were in prison, in exile, or banned? What was his proof that the anti-apartheid leadership was "self-appointed"? How could he declare the people who'd been elected into apartheid structures to be leaders when voter turnout had been so low? And how could he say that no-one should prescribe the outcome of talks; and then reject one of the possible outcomes?

Botha went on to highlight the violence in the country: "You don't build a country by violence and by burning down schools and houses and murdering innocent people, you destroy it." He argued that activist violence was proof that anti-apartheid activists were not democratic: "Violent and brutal means can only lead to totalitarian and tyrannical ends." He welcomed: "… the growing number of Black leaders who are coming forward to denounce violence. Any reduction of violence will be matched by action to lift the State of Emergency…." And he argued that: "… there is more than enough goodwill among Blacks, Whites, Coloureds and Asians to ensure that we shall jointly find solutions acceptable to us."

He concluded: "I believe that we are today **crossing the Rubicon**. There can be no turning back. We now have **a manifesto** for the future of our country, and we must embark on a programme of positive action in the months and years that lie ahead."

South Africa's verligtes and the world at large responded to the speech with dismay. Looking back, Esterhuyse noted that Botha's speech cost the country "millions of Rand per word" (2012, p. 41). On the day before the speech, the South African Rand was worth R2.57 to the USD. Two weeks later, it cost R2.94 to buy a dollar. In an interview by the Irish journalist and peace activist, Padraig O'Malley with Maritz Spaarwater who'd been a senior member of South Africa's National Intelligence Service (O'Malley archive, 2003), Spaarwater talked about a meeting of Botha's security management team in Pretoria in 1985. When Spaarwater walked in, Botha was looking at an economic update by an analyst in the NIS. Botha apparently said "does this mean we're broke?" The analyst replied "yes." On 1 September, South Africa suspended its repayment of government debt.

The Western Cape had been relatively quiet until Botha's speech. That changed on 22 August when the UDF organized a march to Pollsmoor to demand the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners. Thousands of people converged on the prison. The security forces responded with the usual violence. Police shot and killed 9 people on the first day. By the end of the week, 28 people had been killed. The unrest continued. In October 1985, the government extended the state of emergency to the Western Cape.

Academics at the University of Stellenbosch including Esterhuyse and an economist called Sampie Terreblanche responded to Botha's speech by forming an informal think-tank of essentially inner-circle Afrikaner teachers and researchers called "**Discussion group 85**." Members of that group would eventually become instrumental in driving visible change among Afrikaners.

Sheila and I joined the PFP that week. I was teaching in the Dept of Religious Studies at the University of Cape Town. Because of where we lived, I became a member of the Claremont constituency. My MP was the PFP's leader, van Zyl Slabbert.

iii) Liberal White attempts to respond to the situation

The PFP was still the official parliamentary opposition to the NP in 1985. It was a White liberal parliamentary party in the classical European mould. It advocated a non-racial democracy, but argued that change would have to come through parliament because, short of an old-fashioned revolution, South Africa was not going to change without the consent of parliament. However, it recognized that the extra-parliamentary opposition to Botha had become an inescapable feature of South Africa's social, political, and economic landscape.

In the context of the escalating polarization between the government and its extra-parliamentary opposition, Slabbert and his PFP colleagues tried to fashion a strategy that would enable the PFP to save South Africa by parliamentary means. Slabbert believed that the legalization of non-racial political parties had created a strategic opportunity for the PFP. He argued that the party's core policy (a non-racial democracy in a Federal State with protections for minorities) would appeal to a majority of Coloureds, Indians, and, in time, Whites. For this

reason, he suggested, the PFP could become the majority party in the Houses of Representatives (Coloureds) and Delegates (Indians). If, in addition, support for the NP fell below 50% due to losses to the PFP and purist Afrikaners, then the PFP stood a realistic chance of becoming the dominant party in the Tricameral parliament. His aim, he said, was that the PFP should become "the largest, most broad-based political party in the history of the South African Parliament." He called it the politics of power. He put these ideas to the party's Congress in August, 1985. The strategy had two concrete elements:

i. **Outreach**: active recruitment of especially Coloured and Indian members so that the PFP could win majorities in the Houses of Representatives (Coloureds) and Delegates (Indians).
ii. **Mediation**: to become an honest broker by engaging more actively than in the past, with both the government and the liberation movements.

Some in the PFP like Colin Eglin counselled caution: Eglin didn't think it would be wise to mobilize against the liberation movements in this way. It might have been acceptable if South Africa had been a normal democracy. But with so many organizations banned, the PFP's attempts to build a non-racial party would be opportunistic and unprincipled. Others like Molly Blackburn with more experience in the townships were more explicit: it would be "political suicide," she said (Shandler, 1991, pp. 123-4).

For its part, the UDF rejected the strategy outright. Even before the congress, a UDF spokesperson was quoted in the Cape Times as saying:

(The PFP has) *"no moral right to try to corrupt and erode our sense of unity. The PFP must come and ask the Coloured and Indian communities whether they want to participate in the Tricameral Parliament... 82% did not participate in the sham elections last year. If the PFP have not learnt that yet, they must learn that now, otherwise we will find ourselves on different sides of the fence..."*

Slabbert wasn't swayed:

"We cannot expect everybody will like the PFP. We appreciate there will be possible conflict with other groups who do not share our ideals. We are not spending our time finding out how many people do not like what we are doing. We are rather looking at how many people like it."

Net: the PFP adopted a cautiously worded resolution to expand its membership. The response from the UDF was immediate. The Transvaal Indian Congress issued a statement describing Slabbert as no better than Coloured and Indian "sell-outs" who'd opted for participation in the Tricameral parliament. As the PFP quickly found out, it had underestimated the power of extra-parliamentary opposition to make it very difficult to recruit members in African, Coloured, and Indian areas.

Slabbert also proposed another "middle ground" idea – a Convention Alliance. He wanted to show that there is "**an option in the middle** away from **violence to change the status quo** and away from **repression to maintain it**." The idea was to pull together all organizations and formations that found themselves stranded between the government and the liberation

movements. It would be spearheaded by the PFP and Buthelezi's IFP. Soon after the congress, Slabbert and Buthelezi hosted a planning meeting for the Alliance. South African business leaders bought in heavily. Credible anti-apartheid leaders like Bishop Tutu and Beyers Naude sent encouraging messages. The leader of the African Chamber of Commerce's, Sam Motsuenyane, attended. The fact that so many leaders with impeccable anti-apartheid credentials were supportive of the Convention Alliance shows just how desperate South Africans were to find an alternative to the violence that had engulfed the country.

But there was a problem: for as long as South Africa's historical anti-apartheid leaders were banned or in prison or in exile, "middle ground" efforts like those of Slabbert and the PFP were doomed.

iv) Early contacts between South African residents and the ANC in exile

And so, against the backdrop of stuttering attempts to create a "middle ground" – we turn to the negotiations that built social capital and established a network of understanding that eventually led to South Africa's transformation. Savage (2014) has drawn up a useful basic record of meetings between people living in South Africa and the ANC in exile. He noted just four in 1983, mainly with church leaders. He recorded nine in 1984 including attempts by H.W. van der Merwe to set up a meeting with establishment Afrikaners. That's where we'll begin.

H.W. van der Merwe was an academic who founded what's now known as UCT's "Centre for Conflict Resolution" in 1968. He'd introduced himself to the ANC in 1962 by the simple method of walking into their offices in London (van der Merwe, 1998). He recalls that the ANC was a bit taken aback. But by 1980 he'd established his bona fides sufficiently to be welcomed by them as "een van ons" (one of us) at a British Council of Churches conference in London.

In 1984 he met Gertrude Shope (a member of the ANC's National Executive) at the United Nations in New York. She invited him to meet the ANC in Lusaka. Van der Merwe was a Quaker; and he got an opportunity to meet the ANC in August when he attended a meeting of the Quakers in Lusaka. He met with Thabo Mbeki and Alfred Nzo. He writes (1998):

> *"I had argued over the years that ANC leaders genuinely desired a termination of the armed conflict… My new experiences in Lusaka confirmed these impressions…*
>
> *"The meeting proceeded in* (the normal way) … *For more than an hour they* (that is, Mbeki and Nzo) *wanted to know from me as an Afrikaner… what was going on in the inner-circles. I assured them that there was a genuine desire among many top leaders to come to a negotiated settlement with the ANC…"*

Mbeki and Nzo responded by asking van der Merwe to set something up.

When he returned to South Africa, van der Merwe contacted future NDM leader and NP member of parliament at the time, Wynand Malan, to ask him if he'd be interested in meeting with the ANC. Malan said "yes." Malan, in turn, contacted fellow verligte, Leon Wessels, who also said "yes." But Botha got news of the plan and slammed the door shut. Van der Merwe

continued his efforts. He found two inner-circle academics at the University of Stellenbosch who were prepared to risk it: Esterhuyse and Terreblanche. They decided to check with the government. No sooner had they done so, writes van der Merwe, than Botha:

"… had them on the carpet: 'I hear that Van der Merwe is trying to get you to talk to the ANC…' Almost pointing his finger in their faces, he shouted: 'I will not let you talk to murderers!'"

Van der Merwe comments somewhat laconically "And that was that!" His efforts to get inner-circle Afrikaners to Lusaka in 1984 had failed. But he did manage to set up a meeting between the ANC and the deputy editor of *Die Beeld* (The Mirror), Piet Muller. *Die Beeld* was one of the two biggest Afrikaans Sunday newspapers. When Muller returned from Lusaka, he wrote favourable editorials about the meeting, urging the South African government to talk to the ANC. His editorials made international headlines.

And so 1984 came to an end with many parts of the country under a state of emergency. Black activists were targeting Black apartheid leaders and structures; and Botha was struggling to get support from all except Whites and a sprinkling of Coloureds and Indians for his constitutional changes.

The first months of 1985 were relatively quiet because of the state of emergency. Later in the year, the first meetings to produce high profile documentary records took place: first, with White businessmen and opinion leaders in September; and second, with leaders of the PFP in October. I'll also touch on COSATU's first meeting with the ANC in December 1985.

Within a month of Botha's Rubicon speech, a high-profile delegation of businessmen and journalists flew to Zambia to meet with the ANC. They were led by the Chairperson of Anglo-American, Gavin Relly. Anglo was South Africa's biggest mining conglomerate. The meeting was opposed by both the government and the high-profile liberal and former Chair of Anglo, Harry Oppenheimer. But Relly went ahead. President Kaunda of Zambia hosted the meeting. The ANC delegation consisted of six men led by their president, Oliver Tambo.

My sources for the meeting are Tony Bloom's 30 pages of detailed, almost verbatim notes (Bloom, 1985) and the ANC's official 5-page summary (Gerhart and Glaser, 2010, pp. 576-580). Using Bloom's words, I've written the summaries as if they were spoken by the people concerned. So it's important to remember that these are Bloom's renditions of what people said. I've then compared the ANC's record with Bloom's. This meeting was the first exchange of ideas across political lines between South Africans with political or economic power.

1985 (13 September): White S.A. Businessmen and Journalists meet with the ANC in Zambia
President Kaunda hosted the meeting at a game lodge in Zambia.

Each side opened with a statement:

Relly: *"… the country has been irrevocably launched onto a path which will lead to undivided national unity, especially since the citizenship announcement a few days ago.*

"We have come to the meeting as businessmen, firm in our conviction that one cannot create a stable society without economic growth. It is important that the following generation should inherit a viable and dynamic economy…"

Tambo: *"… the ANC believes that South Africa belongs to all South Africans and all South Africans belong to South Africa. Skin colour should not be used to determine a person's worth…*

"We should find out if there is any way out of the present situation… the day is coming when the South African problem will be resolved and the only question is when. (The ANC) *lives and exists for our dream of returning to South Africa."*

Comment: the two sides began by talking straight past each other. On the one hand, Relly jumped almost immediately to the need for economic growth (sub-text: "we are worried by your links with communists – South Africa will need free enterprise"). On the other, Tambo wanted to remind or assure the Whites that all the ANC had ever wanted was to be part of an inclusive, non-racial democratic South Africa.

Relly then asked Zach de Beer (at the time, the head of a big insurance company) to talk about recent political developments:

De Beer: *"The citizenship and pass laws announcements are* ***profoundly significant****. However, the government has skirted the hardcore issue of power-sharing. I believe that power will be shared quite soon. Two questions arise: how much bloodshed will there be and how good a country will we have left?"* Relly: *"… there is a sincere and real undertaking by Botha for* ***genuine negotiation****…"*

Harald Pakendorf (editor of *Die Vaderland,* one of South Africa's biggest Afrikaans dailies): *"…separate development has been seen to be impractical but in addition there is a groundswell of people who see it as unjust. In these circumstances, the pace of change has quickened."*

Summary: Botha's recent reforms are significant. He really wants to negotiate.

Mac Maharaj responded on behalf of the ANC:

Maharaj: "(Our perception is) *entirely different… the people… are not prepared to tolerate the situation for one day more****. Even we find it frightening*** *to see six-year-old kids who* (are) *prepared to die.*

"… the government (is) *fumbling and rudderless. They do not know where they want to go and this has turned out to be* ***favourable to the ANC****. I don't doubt that* (the government) *is capable of* ***blind acts of fury****… this could engulf the whole region in a permanent state of crisis.*

"The ANC are convinced that P.W. Botha wants to introduce change ***without losing power****."*

Comment: in contrast to the Whites' focus on talking to Botha under Botha's terms, the ANC believed that Botha had lost control of the country. The ANC was genuinely stunned by the sheer anger of the protesters: "the people are not prepared to tolerate the situation for one day more!" Botha's manoeuvres were seen to be an attempt to change without losing control.

De Beer's use of the words "power-sharing" was telling. Sub-text: "like Botha, we're afraid of losing control. We don't mind having joint control, but we don't want to cede it." Later in the day, Relly would say that "universal adult suffrage doesn't seem possible at this point" and Bloom would talk about "a qualified franchise." But the ANC's position on democracy had always been, to quote Tambo "… one man one vote in a unitary state."

Tertius Myburgh, the editor of South Africa's biggest English Sunday newspaper, *The Sunday Times*, warned of the threat from the White right. He wondered whether the ANC shouldn't hit "pause" on some aspects of its strategy. According to Bloom, that prompted a "passionate" response from Pallo Jordan (ANC) who began by saying that he "didn't want to be rude" but the ANC's entire history had been one of offering compromises. It was about time that White South Africans woke up and recognized "who was in the right and who was in the wrong."

Bloom then asked a naïve but honest question: "was there no role in South Africa for people who could not identify with either of the extremes and who were looking for a middle ground in politics?" This was the question Slabbert and the PFP had been grappling with – and it was the sentiment behind the Convention Alliance. Implicit in the question was the perception of the NP and the ANC as extremes.

Thabo Mbeki answered "forcibly" (according to Bloom): "We are the moderates!!" Mbeki went on: the ANC had no option but to continue with its dual strategy of military and political pressure – at which point Pakendorf jumped straight to what should happen: "The ANC and the South African Government should be talking to each other without preconditions."

The group talked a lot about the consequences of the conflict and the politics of sustained pressure. Relly argued that the violence had gotten out of control. To the ANC, however, it seemed obvious that the state was losing control and that all the pressures, including the violence that was making Black towns ungovernable, were working. Tambo talked at length about how he hated violence, but argued that the ANC had had no alternative after its decades-long experiments with peaceful protest. To quote:

> *"It was chaos that had made* (the international community and the government) *sit up and take notice and the ANC has therefore come to the conclusion that we have to* ***escalate the violence*** *in order to get a hearing."*

"Middle ground" politics was a topic that kept recurring:

> Bloom again: *"… having heard the ANC's policy I appreciate that it is not possible for the ANC to support an initiative* (like the Convention Alliance) *…but will the ANC at least consider not wrecking it? If not, then I think the problem is potentially insoluble."* Myburgh: *"… we may end up with a miscalculation and with a country that ends up being permanently ungovernable."*

Mbeki and Tambo answered for the ANC. One of the problems with the Convention Alliance was the involvement of Mangosuthu Buthelezi, the leader of the IFP:

> Mbeki: *"… there are major problems associated with Buthelezi."* Tambo: *"The ANC has had many meetings with Buthelezi but Buthelezi has destroyed those meetings.* ***I have never felt so betrayed****… Buthelezi only wants to gain ascendancy, publicity, and push himself up. He has attempted to capitalise on the fact that he can be quoted in South Africa."*

The ANC's point was that Buthelezi was taking advantage of the fact that the ANC was banned. He was opportunistically using an apartheid structure to become prominent. The ANC no longer counted him as a credible partner in the anti-apartheid struggle.

Myburgh drew attention to an article in *Newsweek* in which the ANC had been quoted as saying that it was no longer interested in negotiation, but only in the transfer of power. His point was that, like Buthelezi, the ANC was also exhibiting bad faith. Tambo responded that it was the government's "red lines" that were making negotiation impossible. The government wouldn't negotiate unless the ANC dropped "one man one vote" and armed struggle. Yet, the ANC had always taken great pains to avoid civilian deaths. Meanwhile, the greatest violence was coming from government forces who seemed to feel that they could kill protesters with impunity.

Hugh Murray (editor of a leading magazine called *Leadership*): "*… would Tambo vote for a government of national unity?*" Tambo: "*… if I were a member of a party with South Africans of all colours I'd even vote for Tertius Myburgh if he was the best man.*" (Much spontaneous laughter).

De Beer pulled the conversation back to a set of ideas that obviously concerned the Whites: power-sharing, the political "middle ground," and minority protections: "In various constitutions there are ways to prevent domination of one group over another… there could be a Bill of Rights."

Maharaj: "*The ANC cannot accept a Bill of Rights* ***based on group interests*** (for example, a minority group veto)*, but there would be no problem with individual protections.*

"*I can see that a middle ground like the Convention Alliance is somewhere between the ANC and Botha… and we do see some signs that Botha is genuinely committed to negotiation – but his whole policy is of wanting to negotiate with* ***like-minded leaders****.*"

This free-wheeling exchange highlighted the basic problem that the ANC had with all "middle ground" efforts. In the absence of banned organizations, middle-ground politics limited participation to certain kinds of "like-minded" Black leader who saw the changes as an opportunity to grab power. In essence, middle-ground politics was an attempt to use the space created by exile, imprisonment, and banning, to pull together a multiracial coalition that would marginalize South Africa's traditional anti-apartheid leaders.

The exchange also highlighted White participants' fears of being dominated by a "winner takes all" Black government. They were worried by the ANC's alliance with the Communist Party which, they believed, was anti-democratic and anti-capitalist.

Before breaking for lunch, the ANC expressed its position very clearly: conditions for negotiations could be created if Mandela and other political prisoners were released, troops were withdrawn from the towns, and the state of emergency were lifted. In other words, the ANC and other banned organizations would have to be given the space to act as normal political parties so that negotiations could take place. Myburgh's reply gives us an insight into how far apart the two delegations were: "That would be capitulation," he said.

Tambo started the discussion after lunch with a long discourse on the relationship between the ANC and the Communist Party. He pointed out that he had never been and still wasn't a member of the CP. He noted that the Freedom Charter was the ANC's foundational document and that no deviation from it would be tolerated. He noted that the ANC had approached the USA in 1960 and been rebuffed. Russia, by contrast, had been a good-faith partner. Mbeki added that the fact the USA now wanted a relationship with the ANC "proved," in a sense, that the USA did not think that the ANC was a puppet of Russia.

Then Tambo turned to the economy:

Tambo: "*I am often asked – will South Africa be socialist or capitalist? …the 'haves' cannot continue to exist the way they do today at the expense of the 'have nots.'*

"Monopoly capital will be nationalised, but beyond that private capital will exist. The details have not been worked out. South Africa will be a democratic country and the ANC will nationalise, say, 51% of certain organizations… but it will be submitted to the people and the view of the majority will prevail."

Mbeki picked up the conversation. Poverty and malnutrition were "absolutely disastrous" and could not be allowed to continue. To quote:

"… hundreds of children are dying from malnutrition, more than from the shootings. Any new government must have the power to transform the lives of the people by spreading the wealth… the ANC will have to address this problem…"

But the details of policy would have to be worked out democratically – people would vote in a democratic election for different parties with different policy proposals. Mbeki then made a pointed comment about health care in the world's most capitalist country – the United States: "I have personally seen sick people being brought into hospital and then rejected because they don't have insurance. That is obscene and will not be allowed to exist in South Africa." This important conversation ended when Pallo Jordan of the ANC suggested that Sweden offered a good example of a society that combined private capital with policies to eliminate poverty.

The conversation turned again to the issue of violence and negotiation: "Was there any chance," the Whites wanted to know, "that the ANC would suspend the armed struggle so that talks could take place?" The ANC repeated its position: state violence far exceeded anything that the ANC did; the ANC remained committed to not killing civilians; the ANC would, however, consider a moratorium on the armed struggle if the government released political prisoners and lifted the state of emergency.

And the meeting ended…

Bloom concluded his summary with a number of poignant personal observations:

"*I was surprised (almost overwhelmed) by the cordiality of the meeting. **A more congenial group** would be hard to imagine.*

"I have no doubt that the people we met have an overwhelming nostalgia to come back to South Africa. They love to talk about South Africa…

"I was struck by the absence of traditional Marxist-Leninist dogma. Even in the discussion of the nationalisation of industry (they were) *more socialist than Marxist.*

"The ANC clearly attached ***enormous importance to the meeting****. With one exception they all arrived in suits whereas the South Africans were dressed in khakis and sports clothes."*

He noted that ANC morale was high – they believed that the Botha regime was buckling; but he also noted that the ANC was cognisant of the power of the White state to become more repressive and to oppress for a long time.

Now to the ANC's summary of the meeting. First, it's worth pointing out that this was one of the few meetings with Whites that the ANC documented in such detail – which tells us how important the meeting was to them. Second, the ANC's summary is more businesslike and strategic than was Bloom's, but the two records are not different in their core content.

The ANC summarized the White delegation's main argument as follows: Botha's reform attempts were genuine and he should be given a chance – but the armed struggle and violence were making a resolution less likely because they pushed Botha to be intransigent and Whites to the right. The ANC responded by disagreeing. As far as the ANC was concerned, the violence was, if anything, speeding up the process of change. It was clear that the patience of Black South Africans had been exhausted. Blacks were evidently prepared to continue to throw their bodies at the regime until it broke. In any case, the ANC doubted Botha's bona fides – Botha was just looking for a way to stay in control by identifying "like-minded" Blacks and boosting them to positions of leadership – Buthelezi being an example.

The ANC was pointed in its criticisms of the role that White capital had played in South Africa. It noted that the business boom in the 1960s and early 70s had been accompanied by an intensification of apartheid; and that business always seemed to "swoon" when Botha called a political-business summit; and that business had tried to break democratic Black unions by hiring scab labour.

The ANC spelled out core elements of its policy: first, that talks could not take place when organizations were banned and leaders were in prison or in exile with troops in the townships and the country under a state of emergency; second, that poverty and inequality had to be addressed and that White business did not have a great track record in that regard – but that actual economic policy would emerge from democratic political processes; third, that the Freedom Charter remained at the heart of what they had in mind constitutionally – including economically (sub-text: "it is not a dogmatic communist document"); and fourth, for a great many reasons, the ANC would not abandon its alliance with the Communist Party.

Like Bloom, the ANC's summary noted that the talks had been cordial and constructive.

The White delegation flew back to South Africa to a hostile reception from both the government and Anglo American, but not the press. Relly didn't lose his job, no-one went to jail, no-one was banned or constrained in any way – and the meeting made global headlines.

Within weeks of the Relly meeting, Peter Gastrow of the PFP was in Harare, meeting with Thabo Mbeki and Chris Hani in an ANC safe-house to arrange a meeting between the ANC and the PFP. Gastrow and his wife Shelagh had been visiting her parents in Zimbabwe. Gastrow was the Chairperson of the PFP at the time. While in Zimbabwe, they'd talked about a potential meeting between leaders of the PFP and ANC. An acquaintance who'd moved to Zimbabwe to work for the ANC, offered to help. The three agreed dates, a venue, and an agenda. They also agreed that the meeting should be low key and that there should be no press presence.

The PFP and the ANC met in Lusaka from 12 October (in the evening for drinks) to 14 October (in the morning to draft a joint press statement). The main meeting took place on 13 October. The PFP was represented by van Zyl Slabbert, Alex Boraine, Eglin, and Gastrow. The ANC delegation was led by Alfred Nzo. It included Mbeki, Maharaj, and Shope. Each side kicked off by giving their assessment of the situation in South Africa. They then identified points of agreement and difference. They closed with a brief discussion as to "what next?" The only document we have from the meeting is the joint press statement they released at the end:

"Apartheid lies at the heart of the present crisis. Both sides share the urgent need to dismantle apartheid and to establish a united, non-racial, democratic South Africa.

"Areas of differences were discussed in a frank and cordial atmosphere. In particular there were differences on the role and centrality of the armed struggle in bringing about fundamental change.

"On the question of a national convention as a basis for devising a constitution for a united, non-racial, democratic South Africa… the ANC stated that it does not consider that there (is) *a climate under which it can begin to consider a negotiated resolution of the crisis.*

"… the ANC does not rule out a convention as a means of devising a constitution or negotiations as a means of resolving the crisis. Both believe that one of the urgent issues is to secure the unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners and detainees."

The PFP held a press conference when they got back. Slabbert called the discussions "encouraging." He noted that the two sides had agreed to disagree when it came to strategies of armed struggle and economic sanctions. The ANC's view was that sanctions were helping to speed up the revolution. The PFP argued that they were counter-productive because they deepened the polarization and damaged the economy. Slabbert noted that the ANC hadn't rejected the idea of a Convention Alliance completely and that the PFP had argued that Buthelezi and the IFP were going to have to be part of any future resolution in South Africa.

In October, Botha shut down another high-profile attempt by White leaders to meet with the ANC. H.W. van der Merwe had been approached by Afrikaner student leaders to set up a meeting. When Botha heard about it, he confiscated their passports. Both the English- and Afrikaans-language press criticized Botha heavily for his decision. His actions coincided with important meetings between the ANC and members of the British government. Up until then, Thatcher had largely agreed with Botha's line – that the ANC was a terrorist organization. The UK and the USA had been conspicuous in their abstentions when it came to Security Council resolutions against South Africa. After successful meetings between Tambo and Mbeki and

members of the British government in October 1985, that began to change. Henceforth the British would consider the ANC to be part of the solution, not part of the problem.

These first meetings were important for what they communicated to the White public about the ANC. The ANC was not purely an organization of "barbaric Communist agitators and murderers." And even though the press statements were somewhat formulaic, it was very important to prove to White South Africans that civilized arguments could take place; and to make public statements about the commitment of both sides to non-racial democracy.

On the ANC side, the meetings led to an important shift in strategy. Let's remember that the ANC's roadmap – the 1979 **Green Book** – envisaged the revolutionary overthrow of White government following mass mobilization across multiple fronts. But early in November, Oliver Tambo mandated a small committee including Thabo Mbeki and Pallo Jordan to look at the role that negotiations could play. The committee reported back on 27 November: "… if negotiations can be viewed as yet one more terrain of struggle, then we have no reason to shun them" (Gerhart and Glaser, 2010, Doc. 129). It was an important win for the more diplomatically minded members of the ANC.

On 1 December 1985, 33 trade unions combined to form the **Congress of South African Trade Unions**. It was the worker counterpart of the UDF. With about 450,000 paid-up members, COSATU was the largest trade union federation in South Africa's history. Within days of its formation, leaders of COSATU were able to take advantage of a World Council of Churches meeting in Harare to meet with the ANC. The two met again in March 1986. The COSATU delegation included a future President of South Africa (Cyril Ramaphosa) and the future Minister of Police (Sydney Mufamadi). COSATU made it clear that they were allies but that they would **plot their own course** in the interests of workers. According to some reports, the ANC's labour and communist leaders were irked by the fact that COSATU didn't simply accept the ANC's socialist leadership.

In a surprising development at the end of 1985, Botha's Minister of Justice, Kobie Coetsee, visited Mandela in hospital when the latter had to go for prostate treatment. Mandela described the meeting as "an olive branch." Coetsee described it as "sending goodwill signals." It was historically significant because it was the first meeting between Mandela and a member of Botha's cabinet. But nothing came of it. The head of the National Intelligence Service, Niel Barnard, described Coetsee's initiatives as more or less irrelevant (O'Malley archive, Barnard interview, 1998).

How to summarize the year? The scale and violence of the protests took everyone by surprise. Blacks who were seen to be collaborators with the state were on the receiving end of significant violence. The government responded with military mobilization and violence. On the one hand, the ANC would have interpreted the year as a sign that their People's War was making progress. On the other, Botha had laid out his roadmap: ruthless repression with limited reforms and patronage for compliant Black leaders. Hundreds of people were killed by both

protesters and the security forces. Thousands of people were arrested. Anti-apartheid organizations found it increasingly difficult to function… and important meetings took place between South African Whites with economic or political power and ANC leaders in exile.

v) In 1986 South Africa's security system started to wrestle back control

In its annual statement to start the year, the ANC announced that 1986 would be the year of Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation). It claimed to be winning the war and encouraged activists to continue their attacks on urban Black councils amid what it said was the collapse of Botha's attempts at reform. Later that month, the ANC published "*The Preliminary Nature of the Constitutional Document*" (Jolobe, 2014, p.144). It can be summarized easily: one-person-one-vote in a unitary, multi-party democracy with an entrenched individual Bill of Rights. Towards the end of the month, the UDF and the ANC met in Stockholm to coordinate their strategies.

On the government side, the state of emergency was still in place. In a speech to open parliament called "A New Beginning," Botha offered yet again to release Mandela and committed his government (yet again), to continuing to "dismantle apartheid" – but – without deviating from the manifesto he'd laid out in the Rubicon speech. His vision involved protections for minorities (in other words, not an individual Bill of Rights); and a racially fragmented democratic state.

Although there was bluster from both Botha and the ANC, most historians agree that the situation had reached a stalemate. On the one hand, South Africa's security forces were wrestling control back from extra-parliamentary activists. On the other, Botha's reforms were not going to rescue the country. Just a week into the new parliament in February, Slabbert announced that he was resigning. In under a year, he'd gone from wanting the PFP to be the biggest party in the Tricameral parliament, to believing that he was wasting his time. He was no longer prepared to participate in this "grotesque ritual of irrelevance," he said. He felt that he was trapped in "a ridiculous debate while our country is bleeding." The ANC's Thabo Mbeki put out a statement lauding Slabbert's decision (Gerhart and Glaser, 2010, p. 594):

> *"An act of vision has made this February day a moment of pride for all the people in South Africa. A solemn tribute of honour is due to Dr Frederik van Zyl Slabbert… We salute his courage, honesty and his loyalty to a common South African nationhood…*
>
> *"His refusal to remain in the racist Tricameral parliament must serve as an example to all who consider themselves opponents of the apartheid system… We take seriously Dr Slabbert's call for a negotiated settlement… We would like to reiterate that we are always ready to negotiate for a South Africa which belongs to all who live in it, Black and White."*

Slabbert's resignation and Mbeki's statement were important for the signals they sent. Parliamentary debate had become irrelevant as Botha sidelined parliament in favour of his State Security Council. By 7 March, Botha's security team felt that they'd regained enough control to lift the state of emergency. Just over a month later, leaders of the Catholic church visited the ANC in Lusaka.

1986 (15-17 April): Catholic Bishops meet with the ANC in Lusaka
From a record of the meeting in Gerhart and Glaser (2010, pp. 437-446)

Catholics: Denis Hurley, Smangaliso Mkhatshwa, Wilfrid Napier, Mansuet Biyase

ANC: Oliver Tambo, Thabo Mbeki, Mac Maharaj, Ruth Mompati, Steve Tshwete, Joel Netshitenzhe

Tambo: *"The ANC decided in 1985 that the turmoil in SA marks a great stride towards victory… The present build-up of conflict… marks the beginning of the end. In this regard we seek to get all opponents to close ranks and shorten the period of struggle.*

"The ANC started the process of consultation with forces opposed to the regime and high on the list were church leaders. We place faith in the credibility of the church… The purpose is to seek common understanding…"

Comment: although Tambo's tone is confident, Botha's government apparently thought that it was winning. It had lifted the state of emergency just a month earlier – and neither Coetsee nor Botha thought that it was important to continue to talk to Mandela. Hurley's response to Tambo was: *"… the church has no tangible program…* (we) *have to learn…"*

Tambo: *"This whole exercise creates the opportunity of movement into the White community; it calls attention to the ANC as a movement worthy of approach…"*

Maharaj: *"Pretoria is powerful… but even the White community has begun to question Botha's ability to lead them… The issue is* ***not to avoid violence****; it is how to act decisively to* ***minimise the violence****…* (we must) *sow division in the White community, and activate democrats within this community"*

Comment: it's clear from Maharaj's comments that the ANC had figured out exactly what it wanted to achieve from the opportunity presented by the Catholic Bishops' visit: it wanted to hook the church into the struggle while taking seriously the church's concerns.

The church leaders were worried by both the violence in Black towns and an apparent loss of discipline in the ANC. An ANC bomb had killed five and injured sixty people at a shopping mall in the Natal town of Amanzimtoti. The church leaders pointed out that White support for right wing conservatives was increasing as a result. The ANC noted that it had struggled to maintain discipline. But it also endorsed people's right to hit back violently against both the security forces and perceived Black collaborators:

Maharaj: *"On the issue of 'black-on-black' violence it is clear that one contingent is the regime. It is a serious and dangerous manoeuvre, especially in Natal where Buthelezi has a social base. He is acting on the side of the enemy.*

"It is not that we control each and every event… One important development is the emergence of mass combat units. We were forced to take up arms, and these arms serve a political purpose. We are moving beyond the stage where people (are) *mere spectators to where they are fighting back…"*

Tambo: *"… our experience is that when you sustain struggle, the laager* (meaning, the White fortress) *breaks up… opposition from the right weakens the enemy.*

"On the method of necklacing, I've not got used to that but what made people think of it, of this brutal manner! It's the measure of bitterness resulting from the state's brutal actions."

In summary: the ANC admitted that discipline was a problem, but it believed that the violence, on the whole, was benefitting the struggle. The ANC never stopped pointing out, correctly,

that armed struggle had been a last resort and that the state, whose cause was unjust, was at least as violent.

On economic matters: after their meeting with the businessmen and journalists, the ANC was formulating a coherent economic position even if it hadn't yet formulated clear policies. According to Tambo, the ANC was not going to "destroy the economy." While it was important to have a strong economy, it was also important that the ANC have some control so that the economy worked for the benefit of poor people. The ANC hadn't had the time to think through their policies in detail. "… everything will be decided in a democratic manner," Tambo said.

There was an extended discussion about the alliance with the Communist Party. The ANC repeated its line: the CP had been good allies; the Freedom Charter was not a communist document; Russia had been steadfast allies from the start whereas the West (UK, USA, Germany) had only started talking to the ANC recently. Tambo then added: South African churches have nothing to fear from communism. In Russia, the church had supported the Tsarist state. In South Africa, many churches and Christians had supported the struggle. Tambo himself was a Christian and had never been a communist.

One of the Bishops asked if the ANC saw this kind of meeting as the beginning of negotiation. Maharaj's and Tambo's responses are important:

Maharaj: *"Negotiations can only be conducted by a political power, not with organizations or individuals.* ***Our meetings are part of the process of narrowing P.W.'s*** *(Botha's)* ***support base****."*

Tambo: *"For 1986 there are many campaigns such as the consumer boycott, and the church has to encourage participation by its constituency."*

In other words, these talks were discussions between two sides who wanted to end apartheid – and their purpose was to explore ways in which one side (the visitors) could accelerate the process of change. The other side (the ANC) was very clear about its strategy: **Green Book** + negotiations. For the ANC it was about listening, understanding, and figuring out how the visitors could be roped into "narrowing P.W.'s support base." Tambo concluded:

"We covered a lot of ground on difficult questions. There is the question of violence in the townships – (its extent and forms) *– but people's violence cannot be equated with the violence of the regime. The discussion has placed importance on the need to act and correct errors without stopping the struggle.*

"We learnt a great deal about the fears of Whites and we shall look into them and find ways and means of allaying the fears that can be allayed."

Like other democrats, the church leaders went into the meeting partly to draw attention to the obstacles they faced (violence, doubts about communism, White fears of being swamped, Catholics who were members of the IFP, etc.); and partly to establish common bonds in the struggle against apartheid. As with the ANC's meetings with White opinion leaders and the PFP, the meeting built social capital. The two sides came away believing that they could be partners in trying to create a non-racial democracy.

Violence from both sides exploded in the months after Botha lifted the first state of emergency. Accurate statistics are hard to find. According to the government, 284 people were killed in Black towns by activists between March and June, most of them by necklacing. South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission put the number at 306. More than a thousand Black homes and businesses were attacked, ostensibly because their owners were collaborators with the White state. Most analysts agree that the violence wasn't always revolutionary. Sometimes it was criminal.

From the state's side, South Africa's security management operatives actively recruited Black people to attack the activists. An example is what happened in May in Crossroads, an informal squatter camp outside Cape Town. Conservative Black men attacked young people who might be UDF supporters. More than 60 people were killed. 60,000 people were displaced by the destruction of their homes. The police could be seen colluding with the vigilantes.

In the run-up to the anniversary of the Soweto uprising, South Africa's intelligence services picked up increasing information about plans to take the protests into White towns – the very scenario that Beyers Naude had warned about in 1985. And so, on 12 June, Botha imposed a second, more draconian state of emergency. This time it was nationwide and it would last for four years. In essence, South Africa was now being run by its security management system – a mixture of some senior cabinet ministers, the National Intelligence Service and police and army generals. Here's a brief summary of the emergency measures and new laws of 1986:

> **National State of Emergency (12 June):** allowed Botha to bypass parliament and rule the entire country by decree. Basically, the State Security Council became the government. Although power reverted to parliament under de Klerk in 1989, this state of emergency would last for four years.
>
> **Internal Security Amendment Act No. 55 (26 June):** introduced a new section to the law that allowed for any policeman with a rank of lieutenant colonel or higher to detain a person without trial for 180 days without judicial oversight.
>
> **Public Safety Amendment Act No. 67 (26 June):** gave the Minister of Law and Order a legal framework to declare "unrest areas." In effect, provided for the imposition of additional security powers in those areas at the minister's discretion.
>
> **Security Force Powers:** unlimited power to "search, seize, and detain" in unrest areas. Indemnity from prosecution for action as long as it was done in "good faith" to prevent activity that posed a threat to the state.

This was a full-scale war on the extra-parliamentary opposition to apartheid. It was a test of the ANC/UDF's strategy of making the country ungovernable. More than 20,000 people were arrested in its first year. Severe press censorship prevented any reporting on unrest or security force activity. TV cameras were not allowed near unrest sites. The police had the power to ban or break up any meeting they deemed to be a threat to public order. Mass congregations at funerals were banned. The PFP set up a monitoring system so that relatives could report members of their families who'd disappeared. Within months they'd collected 6,000 names.

Along with the repression came further reforms:

Abolition of Influx Control Act No. 68 (24 June): repealed the pass laws. For the first time since 1797, Black South Africans were allowed to travel around South Africa without getting permission.

Restoration of South African Citizenship Act No. 73 (27 June): restored the citizenship of Blacks who could prove that they were permanent residents of South Africa.

Black Communities Development Act No. 74 (27 June): officially ended resettlement programs. Allowed Black South Africans to own property in designated urban areas.

Considered against the backdrop of both South Africa's colonial history (influx control) and apartheid's grand plan (multiple independent tribal countries), Botha's reforms were big changes. But two cornerstones of apartheid stayed in place: the Population Registration Act which required people to record their racial identity on their birth certificates; and the Group Areas and related acts that created racially segregated territories and towns.

The South African government's strategy can be summarized quite simply: create racially segregated territories – whether on a big scale (as in the tribal areas) or on a small scale (as in urban towns); offer democratically elected self-government to people in these territories; and steer funds towards them so that elected leaders could deliver facilities and services to their residents. By these means, build a willing, multiracial coalition of elected leaders to govern in what would be a radically devolved and segregated country. In the meantime, marginalize anti-apartheid opposition. In contrast to the ANC's analysis, the government believed that violence was playing into government hands by creating a base of support for the National Party among potential Black, Coloured, and Indian voters.

For the international community, Botha's changes were not enough. A group of international mediators led by Malcolm Fraser (a former premier of Australia) and Olusegun Obasanjo (a former leader of Nigeria) had met Mandela and members of the SA government including Botha in February/March. They'd returned in May after getting positive signals about the government's willingness to release Mandela and initiate negotiations. But the South African government let them know what it thought about their efforts when it raided Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Zambia during their visit. They gave up. In June they concluded that Botha had no real intention of ending apartheid. Botha had issued a statement during a visit:

> Future constitutional negotiations would involve all South Africans who forswore violence. Their aim would be to develop a democratically elected system of **power-sharing** that involved everyone but protected minority rights.

But international pressure kept mounting. Largely due to Senator Edward Kennedy, the United States Congress passed the **Comprehensive Anti-apartheid Act** on 2 October:

Import bans: banned the importation of a wide range of South African products including iron and steel, coal, textiles, agricultural goods, and gold Krugerrands.

Export bans: prohibited new corporate investment in South Africa, loans to the South African government, and computers, software, nuclear technology, crude oil, and refined oil products.

Other measures: withdrew South African Airways' landing rights in the USA, prohibited USA airlines from flying to South Africa, cancelled the tax treaty.

The act listed five conditions for its repeal: the release of all political prisoners, the lifting of the state of emergency, the repeal of the Group Areas and Population Registration Acts, freedom of activity for all political organizations; and good-faith negotiations with all relevant South Africans. Many companies disinvested including Barclays Bank, General Motors, Coca-Cola, IBM, and General Electric.

And so, Botha's strategy by the end of 1986 was clear: reform and repress. He hoped to build a multiracial coalition of Blacks, Coloureds, Indians, and Whites by patronage and co-option. And by oppression he hoped to get rid of South Africa's historical, anti-apartheid opposition.

For its part, the ANC was winning the battle for international support. South Africa was isolated. The economy was in serious trouble. But the ability of extra-parliamentary opposition to organize had been knocked back by the second state of emergency. Violence had become a problem as the government covertly fostered armed Black resistance to the UDF and other organizations. There was a civil war in KwaZulu-Natal.

That is all the background we need. Let's look now at the politics of the National Democratic Movement.

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Glossary for Chapter 4: The Politics of the National Democratic Movement

Abbreviations

Adv.	Advocate.
Afr.	Afrikaans-speaking Whites.
ANC	African National Congress (1912 to the present – name changed to ANC in 1923).
AZAPO	Azanian People's Organization. Founded in 1978 as a successor to the banned BPC.
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement – just a name for a movement. Not an organization.
BPC	Black People's Convention (1972 – banned in 1977).
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions (1985 to the present).
DP	Democratic Party formed by the merger of the PFP, NDM, and IP (1989 to 2000).
Eng.	English-speaking Whites.
IDASA	Institute for a Democratic Alternative in South Africa.
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party. Founded by Mangosuthu Buthelezi in 1975. Mainly for Zulus.
IP	Independent Party, founded by Denis Worrall (1988-1989).
KP	Konserwatiewe (Conservative) Party (1982-2004).
MDM	Mass Democratic Movement (successor to the UDF when it was effectively banned in 1988).
NDM	National Democratic Movement (1987-1989).
NIS	National Intelligence Service.
NRP	New Republic Party (1977-1989).
PFP	Progressive Federal Party (1977-1989).
UDF	United Democratic Front (1983 until effectively banned in 1988).

KwaNatal Indaba: "indaba" is a Zulu word for council. The KwaNatal Indaba was a joint initiative by the province of Natal and the Black territory of KwaZulu to establish a united non-racial government. The main participants were the Inkatha Freedom Party led by Mangosuthu Buthelezi and the Natal provincial executive. It proposed a one-person-one-vote, non-racial constitution but with minority protections.

Chapter 4
The Politics of the National Democratic Movement

The National Democratic Movement went public on 8 October 1987. There was no rally, just an announcement. Its most prominent members were Wynand Malan, Peter Gastrow, Pierre Cronje, Esther Lategan, Pieter Schoeman, and Adv. "Lang Dawid" de Villiers. Malan, Lategan, and de Villiers had resigned from the National Party to fight the 1987 elections as independents (see below). Gastrow, Cronje, and Schoeman had defected from the PFP.

In this chapter I tell the story of the politics of the NDM. I was present at an early planning meeting in mid-1987. I became a member at a rally in Cape Town. I do not plan to exaggerate its importance. But what I call "the politics of the NDM" was a very important part of the maelstrom of South African politics in the second half of the 1980s. Then F.W. de Klerk changed everything on 2 February 1990.

We'll start with the White general election in 1987.

i) The 1987 election and the emergence of independents

White South Africans had voted to adopt the Tricameral Constitution in a referendum in November 1983. Elections to the Houses of Representatives (Coloureds) and Delegates (Indians) had followed in August 1984. The new constitution required elections every five years. But it allowed White MPs who'd been elected in 1981 to keep their seats. The first Tricameral election would only have to take place in 1989.

The constitution gave the State President the power to call elections for any of the three Houses at his discretion. On New Year's Eve in 1986, P.W. Botha announced that there would be a White election in 1987. When he opened parliament in January, he set the date for 6 May. Parliament dissolved on 27 February so that people could return to their constituencies to fight the election.

Botha's decision was strategic. Both the extra-parliamentary apartheid opposition and the international community had criticized his 1982-86 reforms as "cosmetic." But Afrikaner purists had not. In 1982, a senior leader of the NP, Andries Treurnicht, had broken away to form the Konserwatiewe Party (Conservative Party). Sixteen MPs had defected with him. Against the backdrop of this breakaway and the upheaval in the country, Botha wanted to get a mandate from White voters. The election would give him a chance to test White support for both Treurnicht's conservatives and the PFP's liberals.

I had become very involved in the PFP by 1986. One of the research topics on which I'd been working at the University of Cape Town was religious conversion. I'd been trying to answer the question: why is the process of conversion sometimes gradual and sometimes sudden? I'd developed an approach called "the Conversion Model" based on a branch of mathematics called Catastrophe Theory. It seemed to me that religious and political conversion might

follow similar processes. A colleague, Beverly Roos, was very friendly with the PFP's Gastrow. She arranged a meeting. After I'd explained my ideas, Gastrow put me in touch with the PFP's new secretary-general, Robin Carlisle. I became a consultant to the PFP.

The PFP had received 20% of the vote in 1981, but its support had fallen to the mid-teens as the country blew up. After the shock of van Zyl Slabbert's resignation, it had reorganized around an ambitious 3-year growth strategy called "Turbocharge." It wasn't much different from Slabbert's 1985 strategy except that it would use the kinds of database methods one sees in USA politics. According to Colin Eglin (who'd returned as leader), the PFP's purpose was "to enable a new realignment of groups in the centre." Key to the strategy was what the party called "the hinge assumption," articulated by leading PFP member, Ken Andrew. Carlisle explained the hinge assumption as follows (Shandler 1991, p. 168-9):

> *"The key to the Party's future is to increase Black and White membership. Once Whites realize that the PFP has substantial support in the Black community, more will support us. Once Blacks see that a large number of Whites support us, more of them will see us as a party with a prospect."*

My job was to assist with strategy and messaging based on survey research. I'd turned out to be good at interpreting numbers – I could look at how people were answering surveys and figure out exactly what they were feeling. Using the Conversion Model, it was easy to differentiate between hard-core supporters and swing voters. One could then analyze voters in different groups and develop political approaches to move them one way or another. These methods are standard now. In 1986/87 in South Africa, they were new.

Table 1: White South Africans' political preferences – 1977 to 1986

Table designed and compiled by the author from survey data provided by Market and Opinion Surveys

	August 1977 to June 1986						June 1986	
	Aug 77	**Feb 81**	**Sep 81**	**Feb 84**	**Dec 85**	**Jun 86**	**Afr.**	**Eng.**
National Party	64	52	51	54	49	52	61	37
Progressive Federal Party	12	18	**22**	17	**20**	**16**	**4**	**37**
New Republic Party	8	6	**7**	6	**3**	**3**	**1**	**6**
Herstigte/Konserwatiewe	**1**	10	10	13	15	**16**	**22**	**5**
Undecided/Will not vote	14	15	10	13	13	14	12	14
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Read: in August 1977, 64% of White South Africans said they would vote for the National Party. 12% said they'd vote for the Progressive Federal Party. By June 1986, support for the NP had fallen to 52%. It was 16% for the PFP.

Note: **Herstigte/Konserwatiewe** is the combined support for two **purist Afrikaner** parties. The **New Republic Party** is what was left of the **United Party**.

The PFP held its annual congress in August that year. I had become quite high-profile by then. I prepared a hand-out for delegates in which I detailed some of my observations about what White voters were feeling (Table 1 above). At that stage we still thought we had three years to rebuild the party.

There are many interesting patterns in Table 1. I've highlighted two:

i. In blue – support for purist Afrikaner parties had risen from **1%** in 1977 to **16%** in 1986. This was a reaction to Botha's policies. It tells you that many purist Afrikaners thought that Botha was abandoning apartheid.
ii. In red – this is the story of the catastrophic fall in support for parties that had traditionally been anti-apartheid (the PFP and NRP): from **29%** in September 1981 to **19%** in June 1986. Mostly this was due to Botha's reforms and the violence that had engulfed the country.

Put simply, White support for the historically anti-apartheid parties had crashed. Botha's reforms had successfully attracted many of the more conservative, English-speaking Whites.

Now look at Table 2.

Table 2: Issues that divided voters in August 1986

Table designed and compiled by the author from survey data provided by Market and Opinion Surveys

Question: Do you support getting rid of apartheid in hospitals?

	NP	PFP	KP	Total
Yes	**48**	**87**	6	48
Don't know	**22**	6	7	17
No	**32**	7	**87**	35
Total	100	100	100	100

Question: To what extent are you worried by the government's use of troops in the townships?

	NP	PFP	KP	Total
A lot	15	**37**	17	19
A little	21	**38**	14	27
Not at all	**60**	**24**	**65**	50
Total	100	100	100	100

Read: 48% of the NP's supporters said that they would support getting rid of apartheid in hospitals. 22% were unsure. 32% said they were opposed. Similarly 15% said that they worried a lot about troops in the townships. 21% said they worried a little. 60% said they didn't worry at all.

"Hospital integration" and "troops in the townships" are proxies for what White voters were feeling about apartheid and security. The patterns in these tables couldn't be clearer. The PFP's supporters were supportive of integrated hospitals but **incoherent when it came to security**. The NP's supporters were supportive of using troops in Black towns, but **incoherent when it came to apartheid**.

One must remember the backdrop to these results: on the one hand, Botha's Rubicon speech had disappointed many people because they felt he hadn't gone far enough. On the other, violence in Black towns had reached unimaginable proportions in the previous year and a half. Most White voters, including many in the PFP, supported Botha's security crackdown.

Probably the biggest disappointment of Botha's Rubicon speech had been his failure to repeal the Group Areas and related acts. According to surveys only 30% of White South Africans still supported the retention of Group Areas. But only 23% supported its repeal. The biggest percentage (47%) supported its **conditional repeal**. This included 68% of NP voters. By "conditional" people meant "as long as standards are maintained" (for instance, building

standards, or compliance with local bylaws, etc.). We will see how this problem of "standards" came back to haunt South African politics after the first democratic election in 1994.

So, my congress paper showed how the apartheid issue broke in our (that is, the PFP's) favour, but security broke against us. Here's how I commented on what we faced (remembering that we thought we had three years to prepare):

"People believe the government is not exaggerating the communist threat… including 57% of the PFP's supporters. People also believe that SA blacks ***have no reason to take up arms*** *against the SA government* (including) *38% of the PFP's supporters.*

"Our tendency is to go (onto platforms) *with harsh and high intensity statements of the kind 'We deplore police action in the townships and call on the government to lift the state of emergency as soon as possible.' Police action is deplorable, but up to 40% of our present supporters think that it is necessary."*

A sizeable proportion of our support was at risk if security became the dominant issue in an election. But a sizeable proportion of the NP's support was at risk on apartheid issues – as long as we got our rhetoric right. I criticized the tone of our rhetoric:

"Consider the effect of a typical PFP statement: 'We call on the government to scrap the abhorrent and counterproductive system of racially segregated education.'"

When you're dealing with an electorate that was "freaking out" (I used those words), lecturing at them wasn't helpful. A majority of White South Africans wanted the NP's apartheid blueprint to go. As long as laws like the Group Areas Act were in place, that wasn't going to happen. But they were afraid that repealing the laws might result in social chaos. They wanted to feel that whoever brought the changes, would be able to manage South Africa's transition to normality. Later that year I gave an interview to an English daily called *The Star* in which I talked about the challenge that the PFP faced. This is what I said (Shandler 1991, p. 171):

"We must isolate the obstacles that prevent (people) *from voting for us. The fundamental barrier is that we are not trusted with transition. People think* ***we are going to give the country away****. People do not think we are able to handle the dynamic which transition will set in motion because* ***we are soft on security****."*

Our congress was at an entertainment complex outside Johannesburg called "Gold Reef City." I was elected to the PFP's Federal Council. The PFP's blueprint for a new constitution included the right of racial minorities to veto any legislation that infringed their rights. One of the more heated debates at the congress involved a motion to drop the veto. One hundred and ten supported the motion, but 90 voted to keep it. Because it was about a constitutional blueprint, it needed a two-thirds majority to pass. So it failed. As a result, South Africa's most progressive anti-apartheid parliamentary party, the PFP, retained what would, in effect, have been **a race-based veto** in its constitutional proposals.

We were in an arena with tiered seating around the edges. At some point on perhaps the second day, I decided to take a break. I'd noticed a distinguished-looking gentleman sitting in

the stands, taking notes. I climbed the tiers to sit next to him. He was Afrikaans. We engaged in some small talk and then he said, "These people are not going to save South Africa."

I have often wondered whether he might not have been a kind of scout for verligte Afrikaners. At that time, we had no idea of the extent to which inner-circle Afrikaners were attempting to formulate a way out of South Africa's dilemma. If he had been a scout, he would have gone back to his colleagues to tell them that they would not find salvation in the PFP.

One of the more prominent "verligtes" was Wynand Malan, the National Party MP for Randburg. He'd been the first person who'd come to mind when H.W. van der Merwe was looking for inner-circle Afrikaners to talk to the ANC in 1984. As a member of the Broederbond, Malan was very involved in debates about the future of South Africa. The Broederbond's chairperson, Prof. Pieter de Lange, had had an unpublicized meeting with Thabo Mbeki in New York in May 1986. Intended for one hour, it had lasted five. Later that year, the Broederbond circulated an historically important discussion document called "*Basiese Staatkundige Voorwaardes vir die voortbestaan van die Afrikaner*" (Basic Political Conditions for the Continuing Survival of the Afrikaner). Malan was one of its drafters.

The election was a problem for Malan. He had always been "verlig." But for years he'd felt that it was possible to be both loyal to the party and fight for change. Now he could not represent Botha's politics and stay true to himself. The first deciding factor had been Botha's commitment to the protection of "own community life" through racially exclusive geographical areas (by "own community" Botha meant language, race, and culture). The second had been Botha's failure to submit the security apparatus to political and judicial oversight. Malan knew many activists. In his view, the government had detained many people to whom it should be talking. When he questioned the detentions, he was told that he was being naïve. He contacted the leader of the NP in what was then the Transvaal, F.W. de Klerk, to tell the latter that he was thinking of resigning. At that stage he had no intention of staying in parliament. In his words, he just wanted to "resign and go home."

Although Malan and de Klerk differed in their racial politics – Malan was non-racial whereas de Klerk still believed in race-based group protections – both were completely aligned when it came to their opposition to the way in which Botha had sidelined parliament in favour of government by the country's security management system. As a senior leader of the NP, de Klerk was on the State Security Council. But even the State Security Council wasn't fully informed as to what was going on. In effect, the country was being run by a security management system consisting of South Africa's intelligence services and police and army generals. Both Malan and de Klerk believed that the country's problems had to be solved by politicians, not securocrats. And they agreed that there had to be what Malan called "clean-slate" negotiations with all parties including the ANC.

In a long meeting at de Klerk's home on a Saturday in mid-January 1987, the two worked through the politics. De Klerk told Malan that his resignation would hurt the NP even if he left

parliament without a fuss. So Malan laid out how the NP would have to change for him to stay. He asked de Klerk to set up a meeting with Botha so that he (Malan) could test whether there was any hope for change. They talked about ways in which de Klerk might put together enough support in the NP's caucus to change in spite of Botha. De Klerk asked Malan to delay his resignation. A week later, de Klerk told Malan that it would be impossible to change the NP's election platform; and that Botha had agreed to meet Malan on Tuesday, 20 January.

The meeting went badly. Under Botha, the party would stick to its program of **repression** and **reform**. It became clear that Malan would resign. Botha warned Malan "to go quietly." If Malan damaged the NP, said Botha, then the NP would destroy Malan politically. The words Botha used were "ons sal jou vernietig" – literally: you will be obliterated – wiped out – reduced to nothing; a wonderfully descriptive Afrikaans word!

On 21 January 1987, a Wednesday, *Die Transvaler* (The Transvaler) reported that Malan had resigned. Although he had not intended to stay in parliament, he was soon contacted by so many people who wanted him to stay, that he changed his mind. One of the more important calls he got was from a UDF activist. The UDF's official position was that the election should be boycotted; and so it called on progressive Whites not to vote in the 1987 election. Yet here was an under-the-radar call for Malan to stay in parliament. By the weekend he'd decided to stand. In a long and sympathetic article, the Sunday newspaper, *Die Beeld*, spelled out the reasons for Malan's resignation: first, the fact that Botha would never abandon race-based living areas; and second, the way in which Botha was implementing the state of emergency.

On the Monday (26 January), the PFP's Ken Andrew announced that the PFP would not oppose Malan in Randburg. The PFP believed that like-minded South Africans should coalesce around a moderate, non-racial alternative to the NP. Malan's response gives us an important insight into what he was thinking. He was disappointed, he said, because: "… *by not opposing me, the PFP are making it much harder to prove that there's a new spirit among voters that the parties are not recognizing*" (*Die Transvaler*, 29 January). He believed that there was a constituency of voters who were ready to dump the existing political stereotypes and get on with building a new, non-racial, united South Africa. Neither the NP nor the PFP represented these voters. By not opposing him, the PFP was making it difficult to quantify the existence of this constituency.

A day later, the South African government announced that its high-profile ambassador to the UK, Denis Worrall, had resigned. Worrall's resignation made international headlines. In a statement made through the embassy in London, Worrall said that he believed it was a time "for bridge-builders within all communities in South Africa to make themselves heard." Newspapers reported that he was considering standing for election against the NP, but that he hadn't made up his mind if he'd join the PFP or stand as an independent. A decisive factor in Worrall's resignation had been the government's failure to support Inkatha's Buthelezi and the KwaNatal Indaba. The Indaba talks had developed a non-racial constitution for the

province of Natal and the Black territory of KwaZulu – but with a minority veto. Buthelezi was, in Worrall's mind, the perfect example of a non-racial partner.

In early February 1987, Malan gave his first speech in parliament as an independent. He was sharply critical of both the NP and the PFP. He said that the NP's plans for reform were no longer relevant. South African politics had moved into a phase that was about power. Apartheid had to be completely dismantled. "Clean-slate" negotiations had to begin with all relevant parties including those that were banned. He said that it had not been easy to leave the NP, but his conscience had made it impossible for him to stay.

Then he turned his attention to the PFP. He criticized it for being incoherent when it came to political violence and security. He offered a new formula: negotiations had to begin without preconditions, but the state would have to retain emergency powers in order to guarantee peace during the process. His point was that the violence (including state orchestrated violence in Black communities) had become so widespread, and in some cases, so purely criminal, that some sort of security apparatus would have to stay in place. But it would be under judicial control with oversight from politicians. State security would not be allowed to run rampant as it had under Botha.

Malan's rejection of the PFP was not a political stunt. In important ways, he was more radical than the PFP. First, he was for negotiations without preconditions – there were still many in the PFP who agreed with Botha that the ANC should renounce the armed struggle. Second, he did not believe that there should be some sort of qualified franchise or protection for minority rights. The PFP was still committed to a group-based minority veto in a new constitution. And third, he was a social democrat – he did not trust the business-oriented PFP to get rid of the inequality that apartheid had caused.

Events continued to move quickly. By 16 February, Worrall had made up his mind not to join the PFP. He would stand as an independent, probably in the Helderberg constituency outside Cape Town. The MP for Helderberg at the time was the high-profile, reform-minded Minister of Constitutional Development, Chris Heunis. By opposing Heunis, Worrall wanted to make a point about the inadequacy of the NP's concept of constitutional reform.

In the meantime, Discussion Group 85 in Stellenbosch was still "discussing." Since the Rubicon speech, its members had interacted regularly with government. A member of the group, Prof. Andre van Niekerk, had written a memo at the beginning of 1986 in which he detailed four inescapable realities of South Africa's situation (Esterhuyse, 2012, p. 53):

> **International isolation:** even Botha's closest friends (Thatcher and Reagan) had abandoned him;
>
> **Negotiations:** banned groups like the ANC would have to be included in negotiations;
>
> **Communists:** the government had to get over its obsession with Russia and communists;
>
> **Group Areas:** all remaining apartheid legislation had to be scrapped.

Another member of the group, economics Prof. Sampie Terreblanche, had given the memo to Heunis. For nearly a year, there had been no response from the government. Then came Botha's announcement that there would be an election! When Malan announced that he would stand as an independent, verligte Afrikaners in Stellenbosch started talking about fielding an independent candidate in Stellenbosch. Malan flew down to meet with and encourage them. The government had still not responded to van Niekerk's memo.

On 20 February 1987 (a Friday), Botha finally met with Discussion Group 85. The meeting developed into an angry confrontation between Botha and Terreblanche. The next day, a number of people in Stellenbosch resigned from the NP. On Monday, the *Cape Times* (Cape Town's main morning newspaper) reported:

"As the Cape Rebellion against President P W Botha's National Party widens, Afrikaner academics are expected to field an independent candidate in Stellenbosch to complement the campaign being fought by Dr Denis Worrall in neighbouring Helderberg."

The article featured a picture of Terreblanche and noted that he might be the candidate. But Terreblanche didn't stand. Dr Esther Lategan, a well-known business person in Stellenbosch, picks up the story:

"... we called a meeting which took place in Willie Esterhuyse's house. Present were about twenty prominent people (mostly academics and a few business people). Michiel (chaired) *the meeting* ('Michiel' is Michiel le Roux, a young business person at the time – later the founder and chairperson of Capitec which is now South Africa's biggest bank). *I sat next to him on his left. He stated the case for putting up an independent candidate against the NP and then started from his right to ask every person whether he would be willing* (to stand). *Every one offered some reason why he could not do it. I was the last in the circle and realized that all the talk was going to remain just talk unless I was willing to do it. Thus without further ado I accepted.*

"So on Sunday the 1st of March, the news broke that the Stellenbosch group nominated me to stand as independent candidate against the NP. We did not have any contact with the PFP and did not want any help from them... (They) *were in any case not what we were about. In my heart of hearts I have always been a social democrat and not a liberal democrat."*

Worrall and Lategan were standing against well-known verligtes in Helderberg and Stellenbosch – but that was the point. The three independents no longer believed that the NP under Botha was capable of saving South Africa. By standing against reform-minded people, they were making the point that being a reformist in the NP was a waste of time. Years later Piet Marais, the ultimately successful NP candidate in Stellenbosch, would say that he found it very difficult to fight the election because he agreed with everything that the independents were saying.

The PFP responded by announcing that they would stand back in all three constituencies. They also announced that they would not field candidates against three reform-minded members of the NP who were at some risk of losing their seats to the KP (Albert Nothnagel, Sam de Beer,

and Leon Wessels). By doing so, the PFP hoped to send a strong electoral signal about the need for political realignment in South Africa.

The NP's strategy for the election was simple: it promised to keep the country safe while continuing with reform (what the USA's Central Intelligence Agency referred to as r**epression** and **reform** – see below). The NP's campaign slogan summed it up perfectly: "Reform, yes. Surrender, no." As the elections would show, a majority of White voters thought that Botha was getting the balance between reform and security just about right. But the NP struggled to articulate a critique of the independents. The best it could do was to argue that they were simply the PFP in disguise – "pawns of the PFP," to use F.W. de Klerk's words (*Die Transvaler,* 16 February). When that failed, he tried a different criticism: the independents had no plans.

The independents responded with a joint press statement on 9 March 1987.

A press statement by the independents
As reported in *Die Transvaler*

i. All apartheid legislation must be scrapped – in particular, the Group Areas Act must go
ii. Political organizations must be unbanned so that "clean-slate" negotiations can begin
iii. Security legislation will be needed to keep the peace during negotiations
iv. Regional initiatives that dismantle apartheid like the KwaNatal Indaba, should be supported
v. Needless regulations that hamper economic development must be scrapped

Although they had not formed a political organization, under pressure from the NP they'd felt the need to identify a set of principles on which they could agree. Let's contrast the independents' messaging with the PFP's advertising at the time:

PFP election messaging, April 1987
Copy of a PFP advert referenced in Shandler, p. 182

> I am going to vote PFP because they had the courage to put aside party politics to form an alliance of moderates
>
> I am going to vote PFP because I agree with them and Wynand Malan that there must be real negotiations
>
> I am going to vote PFP because they agree with Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi's efforts in the KwaNatal Indaba
>
> I am going to vote PFP because I agree with them and Denis Worrall that there should be real political power-sharing
>
> I am going to vote PFP because they agree with the Stellenbosch professors that the Group Areas Act must go

"The Stellenbosch professors" were Discussion Group 85. The advert obviously does not face up to the PFP's problem with security. Late in the campaign I wrote a confidential memo to the party's Strategy Committee to argue that **we had to change our messaging**. "*Until we correct the public's distorted perceptions of us,*" I wrote, "*there is no way that we can mobilize the issues in our favour.*" But we didn't change our messaging.

Compared to the PFP, the independents' statement was more explicitly about action: repeal all apartheid laws, unban all relevant political organizations; begin "clean-slate" constitutional negotiations; maintain security during the process.

White South Africans went to the polls on 6 May 1987. They gave Botha his mandate: the NP won 123 seats in the 178-seat parliament. But the NP's vote-share fell from 58% (in 1981) to 53%. Purist Afrikaner parties increased their vote-share from 16% to 31% and won 22 seats.

The election was a disaster for the PFP. Its share of the vote fell from 20% to 14%. Its seat-count fell from 26 to 19. The anti-apartheid NRP did even worse – it won only one seat. The total vote for historically anti-apartheid parties collapsed from 27% to 16%. In the context of purist Afrikaner gains, it's not surprising, therefore, that most of the media interpreted the result as a swing to the right. The *New York Times*'s headline was typical: "South Africa Treks to the Right." But the commentariat were wrong. The election was a triumph for the three high-profile independents (see Table 3).

Table 3: Election results prove Wynand Malan's thesis

Table compiled by the author from election results published in Die Transvaler (1 May 1981, 7 May 1987)

		Constituencies							
		Randburg		Helderberg		Stellenbosch		Gardens	
		1981	1987	1981	1987	1981	1987	1981	1987
Parties	NP	53.0	**38.0**	65.3	**46.8**	75.8	**56.9**	44.6	47.4
	Ind		**56.0**		**46.6**		**37.8**		
	PFP	47.0		34.7		24.2		55.4	**52.6**
	KP		6.0		6.6		5.3		
	Votes	11,588	14,717	9,632	18,020	7,743	9,305	11,365	9,508

Notes: In **Randburg** in 1981, there was no independent candidate. Malan got 53% of the vote standing for the NP. In 1987, he got 56% of the vote standing as an independent.

In **Helderberg**, the independent/Worrall got 47%. The NP's vote crashed from 65% to 47%. In **Stellenbosch**, the independent/Lategan got 38%. The NP's vote crashed from 76% to 57%.

In **Gardens**, Ken Andrew **could not increase** the PFP's share of the vote.

Malan, Worrall, and Lategan made **significant gains** for the anti-apartheid vote: from 47% to 56% in Randburg; 35% to 47% in Helderberg; and 24% to 38% in Stellenbosch. My research had shown that these gains were possible. To make the point, I've contrasted these results with those for Ken Andrew, the high-profile PFP candidate in Gardens: **his vote-share fell**.

The PFP came up with a number of explanations for why it had done so badly. These included the NP's control of television; the fact that the UDF had called for a boycott; and the failure to take political surveys seriously (Shandler 1991, p. 183). But the USA's CIA was more accurate than either the commentariat or the PFP. In a short, now declassified document, it wrote:

> *"... we believe the May election returns reflect **a repositioning of parties** rather than a dramatic rightward shift...*

"Parties favouring varying degrees and paces of reform ***received about 60% of the vote…*** *The ruling party did well because the platform of* ***reform*** *and* ***repression*** *encompassed these two key elements… In contrast… the left-wing parties…* ***paid little attention to whites' security concerns****."*

By "left-wing" the CIA meant the PFP and NRP. The CIA correctly pointed out that the results did not show that South Africans had become more conservative. Instead, as Botha had reformed, people who were already conservative had switched to the Konserwatiewe Party. Botha had managed to compensate for this by attracting support from the PFP/NRP. The CIA's analysis of the poor performance of the PFP/NRP was also correct: neither had addressed Whites' security concerns. In Greytown, one of the few constituencies where the PFP increased its majority, Pierre Cronje ignored the PFP's campaign literature and, in his own words, "targeted directly on the 'false security' offered by the NP." His messaging pointed out that under the NP, young White men had gone from conscription by lottery for 9 months in 1960, to a compulsory 2-year call-up with an additional 12 years of annual military camps in 1985.

I fault the CIA's analysis for not drawing attention to the performance of the independents. The independents proved Malan's point: a sizeable proportion of the White electorate was frustrated by the NP's failure to get rid of apartheid, but unable to trust the PFP.

Botha's NP interpreted the results as a triumph. It had smashed the historical anti-apartheid parties. At the time, there was an English-speaking government propagandist (Cliff Saunders) who regularly delivered a "political analysis" after the news. I watched his segment on the day after the election. It was bleak. There would be no deviation from Botha's plan: **repress** and **reform**.

I was still teaching at UCT. I used to teach courses on Confucius. He had lived around 500 BCE in territories that would later become China. His teaching attracted a big following but he failed to achieve socio-political reform in his lifetime. Soon after he died, the territories entered what's called the Warring States period (476-221 BCE). It was an era of chaotic civil war that only ended when a ruthlessly violent warlord called Qin Shi Huang conquered the other warlords. He established the Chinese empire. In 202 BCE, soon after he died, one of his generals established the Han dynasty. The Han adopted Confucian teaching as their official doctrine. It had taken the Confucians nearly three hundred years to succeed. It's an odd analogy, I know, but as I watched Saunders I thought about the Confucians. I thought that the liberation of South Africa was still far away.

ii) Ongoing ANC contacts: Archbishop Tutu, business leaders, the Dakar conference

In the meantime, South Africans continued to cross the lines for discussions with the ANC. In March 1987, Archbishop Desmond Tutu visited Lusaka. He wasn't timid when it came to violence. He argued that "evil means" should not be used in service of a just cause. He condemned necklacing, calling it "monstrous" and "abhorrent." Tambo responded by

reiterating the ANC's line: armed struggle had been a last resort and the ANC would not unilaterally suspend it. He reiterated that the ANC was trying to avoid civilian casualties.

By this time, international businesses were quite despondent about the impasse between Botha and the ANC. On 24 June 1987, a number of business leaders including Michael Young of Consolidated Goldfields met with Tambo, Mbeki, and Maharaj in London. During the meeting, Young took Tambo aside to suggest that they set up back-channel negotiations between inner-circle Afrikaners and the ANC. Tambo agreed. It was the first step in what became a series of talks that helped to lay the foundation for change (see the next chapter).

The most high-profile meeting during this period was the Dakar conference organized by the **Institute for a Democratic Alternative in South Africa** (IDASA) in July. The PFP's former leaders, van Zyl Slabbert and Alex Boraine, had founded IDASA in September 1986. It aimed to be a strategic intervention that would break the impasse in South Africa by organizing talks across political lines. Accordingly, it set about organizing a series of high-profile conferences, the most famous of which was the conference in Dakar in Senegal from 9-12 July 1987.

Van Zyl Slabbert quietly assembled a delegation. Invitees were asked to keep their invitations to themselves because IDASA was worried that Botha would confiscate their passports if he knew who they were. The delegation consisted of 61 influential, mainly Afrikaans-speaking academics, journalists, artists, politicians, and professionals. In Dakar (Senegal), they met with 17 members of the ANC led by Thabo Mbeki.

The conference was structured around four topics: strategies for change; building national unity; constitutional options for democracy; and the economy. IDASA delegates had written position papers prior to the conference. These had been circulated to the ANC who then responded in conference. It was a very South African affair. Everyone talked about everything: violence, armed struggle, inclusive politics, cultural protections for Afrikaners, a Bill of Rights, multi-party democracy… No-one was afraid of sometimes loud confrontations.

For its part the ANC reiterated that it had never intended to harm civilians, that it was committed to multi-party democracy, and that it wanted negotiations with the government; but that racism and fascism would be outlawed, that all political organizations would have to be unbanned for negotiations to take place, and that it was in favour of a Bill of Rights as long as there were no minority vetoes or group protections.

The conference is rightly regarded as an historical milestone because of the sheer extent of Afrikaner participation. At the end, the participants put together a press statement:

Dakar Communique issued jointly by the ANC and the Dakar Group
12 July 1987

"The discussion took place in an atmosphere of cordiality and unity of purpose arising from a shared commitment towards the removal of the apartheid system and the building of a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa.

"The group listened to and questioned the… goals… and tactics of the ANC. The main area of concern arose over the ANC's resolve to intensify the armed struggle… the group accepted the historical reality (of the armed struggle) … (but) *was deeply concerned over* ***uncontrolled violence****.*

"Conference unanimously expressed preference for a negotiated resolution of the South African question. Participants recognize that ***the attitude of those in power in South Africa*** *is the principal obstacle to progress…*

"… there is an urgent necessity to realise the goal of a non-racial democracy… ***participants accepted that different strategies must be used****… in its conduct, this struggle must assist in the furtherance of democratic practice and building of a nation…"*

The delegation flew home to the usual knee-jerk reaction from a hostile government and press (including the so-called liberal English press). Esterhuyse reports (2012, p.34) that Botha had wanted to arrest everyone when they landed, but that the head of South Africa's intelligence service, Niel Barnard, had persuaded him not to.

Influential South Africans had been crossing political lines to talk to each other since 1985, but nothing matched the scope and breadth of this meeting. It is perhaps the most famous of the interactions that created the networks of trust that eventually led to a relatively peaceful transition to democracy. But as Esterhuyse notes (2012, pp. 34-35), one must distinguish between interactions that create social capital and interactions that involve political power. The Dakar conference was the former, not the latter. Some in the Dakar delegation may have hoped to use IDASA as a platform through which they could position themselves to be prominent leaders in a future South Africa. Most of its participants were well-known. But very few on the White side became power brokers.

Among the participants were three members of the PFP's parliamentary caucus: Peter Gastrow, Pierre Cronje, and Pieter Schoeman. Like all the delegates, they had kept their invitations to themselves. They returned to an **extremely hostile** reception from their PFP colleagues. They were attacked for supporting Slabbert and for not consulting their colleagues before going. There was no understanding of the need for secrecy.

iii) The formation of the National Democratic Movement

By the middle of 1987 I'd become a kind of "go to" person for anti-apartheid organizations who wanted to know what South Africans were thinking. I remained a committed member of the PFP. I was consulting to the KwaNatal Indaba. And I'd done political research for Enos Mabuza, an elected leader of the Black territory of Kangwane. Mabuza was one of the few territorial leaders who'd stayed credible in the struggle. As a result, Kangwane stayed peaceful when South Africa blew up in 1984/5. I was so impressed by his leadership that I asked him if I could join his political party, *Inyandza* (bundle of sticks). He knew I was a member of the PFP. He said "fine." I didn't tell the PFP because they insisted on exclusive party membership.

By that time, I'd become very good friends with two of the Dakarites: Peter Gastrow and Pierre Cronje. Sometime after the Dakar conference I got a phone call from Gastrow. He and Cronje

had been invited to meet with Wynand Malan and Esther Lategan at a holiday home owned by Lategan and her sister in a small seaside resort called Kleinmond. They would like me to be there to talk about what South Africans were thinking. My role would be to listen to what the independents had in mind; and then to spell out what an organization would have to look like if people were to understand it. Wynand Malan, Esther Lategan, Adv. "Lang Dawid" de Villiers, and Harald Pakendorf (one of the 7 who'd met with the ANC in 1985) were there from the independents. From the PFP it was Gastrow, Cronje, and me. None of us can remember exactly when we met but it was probably late in August 1987.

The four explained that what the press was calling the "Independent Movement" wasn't a formal organization with a coherent strategy. The election had proven, however, that the country was ready for something new. For reasons which everyone understood (read on) it could not have Worrall as a leader. They'd asked Gastrow and Cronje for a meeting because they had a track record of doing politics in a way that transcended political stereotypes. For instance, as newly elected parliamentarians in 1981, they'd tried to establish a discussion group with National Party MPs. And they'd developed relationships of trust with extra-parliamentary leaders like the UDF's Archie Gumede and Yunis Karim. Both maintained (sometimes strained) relationships with Inkatha leaders like Oscar Dhlomo. Cronje's constituency bordered on Black territories hit by the war between the UDF and Inkatha. He regularly used his parliamentary status to stand in no-man's land between people with guns; and to rein in South Africa's security forces.

At the heart of what the Kleinmond group had in mind was what they called "process politics."

In any country, politics is a complex, evolving system. The purpose of the new movement would be to achieve a non-racial, multi-party democracy in South Africa by acting as a catalyst for transformation. The "process" approach recognized that all peaceful strategies should be used. South Africa was stuck because its existing political organizations were locked into **strategic straitjackets** as a function of which side they took. After the formation of the UDF, the notions of the "system" (Botha, parliament, the PFP, some Black territorial leaders, the security apparatus), and the "struggle" (all anti-apartheid extra-parliamentary and banned organizations), took hold to describe the two opposing camps. **All were stuck in a politics of polarization**. You were either "for" one side, or "against" it. You either participated in the "system," or boycotted it. The Kleinmond group had a movement in mind that would transcend these stereotypes.

My job was to answer the question: what would the public have to see in order to understand what the movement was about? Although it would be difficult to communicate the concept of "process politics," it should be relatively easy to demonstrate that the movement had broken out of the "system/struggle" divide. I remember coming up with five criteria for success. But I took no notes (no-one did) and can only remember one: the public face of the movement – that is, the people who were in it or worked with it – should reflect the reality that it claimed.

For that to happen, it would have to have high-profile participants and patrons from across the political spectrum. In particular, it would be important to attract more members of the NP.

Why the NP? Well, because NP defectors would send a signal to both "system" and "struggle" that the NP monolith was breaking – and that NP defectors believed that the future lay with the new movement. It would matter to White voters who were looking for a new political home; and to Black South Africans looking for hope. The choice of the new movement rather than the PFP or Worrall, for instance, would send a message about what was needed – an organization that could cut across political lines.

The discussion then moved on to additional features of the new movement: it should be able to both participate in parliament (which was anathema to the "struggle" side) and work with extra-parliamentary organizations (which was anathema to the "system" side); and it should be seen to have the kind of respect across the political spectrum that no others had – from socialist parties like AZAPO (the descendant of the Black People's Convention); to purist Afrikaner organizations as represented by a former leader of the Broederbond, Carel Boshoff.

In the following weeks, the group quietly contacted people that they thought would be sympathetic. But time went by and no NP members joined. Eventually, the team decided that they could no longer delay a launch. On 2 October 1987 (a Friday), the group met again in Kleinmond. They agreed a name: National Democratic Movement. All would have preferred "Social Democratic Movement" because they believed that there would have to be redistribution to get rid of the inequality caused by apartheid. But the NP had demonized the word "social." The group still hoped to be joined by NP defectors.

On the weekend, Adv. de Villiers and Wynand Malan met with Worrall to talk about next steps for the independents. They suggested that he temporarily keep a low political profile. Worrall agreed to focus on Helderberg. He had organized a public meeting for the Tuesday. At the meeting he told everyone that he planned to spend some weeks in Helderberg before doing anything else. But he didn't know about the imminent launch of the new movement.

Gastrow, Cronje, and Schoeman resigned from the PFP on 7 October 1987 (a Wednesday). That Thursday, their resignations were headline news. The front page of the *Cape Times* (Cape Town's leading morning newspaper) was typical:

Cape Times (8 October 1987): Dakar Progs and Independents merge after Split

"In a day of high political drama, the PFP was hit by new resignations… The defectors, Gastrow, Cronje, and Schoeman… joined Wynand Malan to form a new alliance called the National Democratic Movement.

"It's significant that Dr Denis Worrall, isn't in the NDM's leadership committee. It confirms rumours that serious differences had developed in the Independent Movement between Worrall and Malan."

In welcoming the PFP 3, Malan said:

"In the last few months discussions have been held across a wide spectrum with South Africans, both inside and outside Parliament. A real need exists in South Africa for ***a new and different approach*** *to South Africa's problems. Sharing this need are Peter Gastrow, Pierre Cronje, and Pieter Schoeman…*

"Our ideals can only be realized through a process of negotiations – without preconditions – with all… ***including organizations presently banned*** *and* ***political leaders presently detained."***

On the key issue of security, Malan said that: "… circumstances may arise which may **necessitate the exercise of special powers…** However, such powers should be subjected to monitoring and control by an independent judiciary. In accordance with these convictions, we believe that **the present state of emergency should be lifted** as a matter of urgency…"

Used with permission: Independent Media

Leaders of the NDM (from left to right): Adv. de Villiers, Peter Gastrow, Esther Lategan, Pierre Cronje, Wynand Malan. Missing: Pieter Schoeman. It is grainy because it's been scanned from an 8 October 1987 press clipping.

The NDM aimed to stay a movement and not register as a political party, but it had to create documents to describe to its followers what it was about. The following extracts come from early communications produced by the leadership committee.

Excerpts from early NDM documents

> The NDM believes that **all South Africans** need to be involved in a process of negotiation that builds a new country whose citizens are equal before the law (and) where **distributive justice** in the allocation of resources **enhances the quality of life for all**.
>
> We will do this through **an inclusive political process** involving South Africans of all political groupings (including): the NP, the PFP, Inkatha, the UDF, purist Afrikaners.
>
> Our politics has two components: one is the traditional political arena of elections and **participation in parliament** and elected structures. The other is **extra-parliamentary** which is where you will find the overwhelming majority of South Africans…

We will get rid of the **irrational division** between parliamentary and extra-parliamentary politics.

How was the NDM different from the PFP? Well, in many ways. First, it was explicitly social democratic. Second, it was more respectful of people's ideological differences. Third, it had a coherent approach to the need for security during a peace process. And fourth, it **successfully straddled** the divide between being in parliament and supporting the anti-apartheid struggle. Individuals in the PFP like Pierre Cronje, Jan van Eck, and Molly Blackburn had managed to straddle the "system/struggle" divide, but the party as a whole had failed.

And how was it different from IDASA? In two ways: first, the team believed that any catalyst for real change would need power both **inside** and **outside** parliament. And second, it was **more inclusive**. One of the NDM's earliest initiatives involved talks with the purist Afrikaner thought leader, Carel Boshoff. Most anti-apartheid organizations thought of purist Afrikaners as people who had to be defeated. The NDM thought of them as people who should be included.

By that time, Boshoff had come to the view that Afrikaners who wanted self-determination in a territory of their own would have to negotiate for such a territory. He argued that it would not only be impractical for them to keep the territory they currently owned. It would be unjust. When we met with him, Wynand Malan suggested that Boshoff should devise a map to represent what he thought could be the territory for an Afrikaner homeland. So Boshoff did. He suggested that Afrikaners could fairly lay claim to an independent nation in the arid, sparsely populated North-Western parts of the country. His legacy is preserved to this day in the purist Afrikaner town of Orania in the Northern Cape.

iv) How did people respond to the NDM and why was Worrall left out?

Worrall was surprised by the launch and the press was surprised by the exclusion of Worrall. Front-page headlines the next day were typical:

Cape Times (9 October 1987): New Party in Crisis

"The new National Democratic Movement ran into stormy weather less than 24 hours after its hasty launch, with divisions already emerging between Dr Denis Worrall and the leadership of the new body.

"A major question mark hangs over the political future of Dr Worrall, who now appears to have been sidelined by the NDM.

"A clearly peeved Dr Worrall yesterday said he'd been left in the dark about the launching of the new political movement…"

This is a great example of the difference between perception and reality. There hadn't been a coherent movement. There had only been three high-profile candidates who had only had time to agree a rough set of principles per their 9 March 1987 statement. There had, however, always been political differences between Malan and Worrall. Both had, in good faith, concluded that they couldn't stay in the NP. Both had decided to fight the NP in the 1987 election as independents. The public had understandably seen them to be spearheading a new

organization – the "Independent Movement." But Malan and Worrall differed fundamentally on how inclusive the process should be. Worrall favoured "system" politicians like Buthelezi. Malan understood that all relevant people and organizations would have to be part of the effort to rebuild South Africa.

The pair had a meeting in Helderberg on the Friday evening. The meeting confirmed the break-up. Jannie Momberg, one of Worrall's high-profile organizers, declared for Worrall. In Stellenbosch, Sampie Terreblanche declared for the NDM. The English press went into overdrive. Headlines on the weekend were typical: "Opposition Shambles" wrote the *Weekend Argus* (10 October 1987); "Worrall declares war on new group" (*Cape Times* 10 October). South Africa's biggest circulation English newspaper, the *Sunday Times*, focused on how the break-up would impact White opposition to apartheid:

Sunday Times 11 October 1987: The kamikaze option

"South Africa's white, left-of-centre politicians are queuing up to press the self-destruct button. In a week during which Mr Wynand Malan and three disaffected senior Progs went marching off into the political sunset (and) *Dr Denis Worrall was isolated on his precarious Helderberg perch* (and) *the PFP itself was left enfeebled and confused**; liberal opposition politics took a hard, possibly terminal knock**."*

In a front-page interview with *The Argus* on the Monday, Worrall echoed the *Sunday Times*'s line of attack: the NDM, he said, was "... ***tainted*** *by the three Progressive Federal Party 'Dakarites'*" – as if talking to the ANC was a political mistake. A more nuanced report came from the Afrikaans Sunday paper, *Rapport* (11 October 1987). Under the headline "Nou Siek en Sat" (Sick and Tired), it commented:

"Wynand Malan and Denis Worrall – for personal and political reasons that crystallized over the past 8 months – simply couldn't stand each other... In the end, the two were completely incompatible... Dr Worrall aimed at ***conventional White politics****; Mr Malan wanted to* ***break new political ground****."*

As an example of the differences, according to Rapport, Malan and Lategan had complained that Worrall had shown no interest in going into Black townships to talk to people and understand their politics. When asked about this Worrall replied: ***"It's true that I don't understand those people."***

"The break between the Independents and the further fragmentation of the PFP have weakened the opposition to the left of the NP ...the break-up must be ***bewildering to white voters****..."*

I knew from my research that the press was correct: anti-apartheid White voters would be dismayed. The country had to be saved. The opposition needed to be unified. The fact that it was fragmenting was a problem. I also knew that the NDM's failure to attract new defectors from the NP was going to make it difficult for the NDM to attract support from White voters. But there were principled differences between the three organizations. The PFP was losing its extra-parliamentary credibility and Worrall knew that contact with the ANC would harm his electoral prospects. For Malan and the NDM, by contrast, it was unthinkable that you wouldn't be engaging with all South Africans if you wanted to save the country.

The reception from extra-parliamentary organizations was more positive. The day after it launched, South Africa's leading business daily, *Business Day*, reported on the UDF's response to the NDM:

"The UDF yesterday gave its 'cautious approval' to the NDM and said that while the NDM had not yet announced its principles or strategies, the UDF hoped its role would be complementary to 'that of the extra-parliamentary mass democratic movement led by the UDF…'

"UDF spokesperson Azhar Cachalia said that there were now 'more possibilities' for discussion between the NDM and the UDF as a result of ***Worrall's omission*** *from the NDM leadership which the UDF believed would have 'straitjacketed' it.*

"He (noted that) *informal discussion between Malan and the UDF had uncovered more common ground than expected."*

Cachalia's statement drew attention to the break-up with Worrall because like the NDM, the UDF knew that Worrall wasn't **fully committed to an unconditional and inclusive political process**.

Five days later (13 October 1987) the Cape Times published a front-page article about more extra-parliamentary support for the NDM. Cyril Ramaphosa, a future state president and the secretary-general of South Africa's biggest trade union, the National Union of Mineworkers, had expressed his support. And in an interview with *The Argus*, the UDF's co-president, Archie Gumede, expressed his support. The UDF was a vociferous critic of the state of emergency. Gumede was asked how he felt about the fact that the NDM was in favour of security laws for a peace process. He answered: "… *it's understandable!*" Asked why he was positive about the NDM but not the PFP he said:

The PFP *"has nailed its colours to the qualified franchise, a highly qualified franchise. We don't think that once you create a privileged group, it will relinquish power voluntarily."*

He didn't get it quite right: the PFP had actually exchanged the qualified franchise for the minority veto. Either way, its constitutional proposals would have given Whites the power to block "undesirable" legislation. Gumede also criticized the PFP for being too closely aligned with business. White capital had had a poor track record when it came to inequality.

The extra-parliamentary response to the NDM didn't go unnoticed. The day after its interview with Gumede, *The Argus* published an editorial headlined **Crossing the Divide**:

"… it is nevertheless interesting to note the response of the extra-parliamentary quarters to the emergence of the 'independent' phenomenon… The advent of the National Democratic Movement ***has drawn approval****, however, tacit, from these ranks."*

Sooner or later, it wrote, all sides would have to "cross the divide" to hammer out a political solution for South Africa.

In an article in a left-leaning weekly called "*South View*" the NDM received one of the more interesting endorsements – from Johnny Issel, an unflinching communist and patron of the

UDF. Issel wrote that the UDF had "*definite shortcomings when it comes to organising among whites.*" He went on:

"The NDM has shown that it has the potential to reach substantially larger numbers of whites than the UDF can ever hope to achieve… there is no possibility of the NDM affiliating with the UDF. However, the UDF is not prevented from forming alliances."

What Issel was pointing out, was that the politics of protest was foreign to White South Africans. And so, while the best strategy for the extra-parliamentary organizations when it came to Botha's government was boycotts; one had to recognize that Whites were incapable of thinking outside the parliamentary box. He dismissed the PFP as a potential alliance partner because, he said, "it had swung to the right." The NDM, on the other hand, was the kind of parliamentary organization with which the UDF could align.

The NDM was social democratic in the Swedish mould. But Issel's article sent an important signal about the NDM's reach – from radical communists to right-wing Afrikaners. It quickly became apparent that the NDM had succeeded in doing what no other parliamentary organization had done – it was both in parliament ("system") but had the respect of the extra-parliamentary ("struggle") sector. **Neither the PFP nor Worrall had any hope of pulling that off.**

Gastrow's personal archive

NDM politics before the NDM: In 1981, Pierre Cronje unexpectedly won the Natal seat of Greytown for the PFP. At the time, the PFP had no MPs in the Orange Free State. Van Zyl Slabbert asked Cronje to be the PFP's 'MP for the OFS.'

At Cronje's first meeting with the PFP provincial executive led by Marlene Webber in 1981, he advised them to stop working on conventional White electoral politics and focus instead on organizing political interactions between all comers – from the Afrikaner far right to local Black activists – on relevant issues like inequality, racism, oppression.

The first trial of this new approach occurred two months later in Webber's garage. They invited local organizations and put up 30 chairs. Soon there was standing room only.

Cronje picks up the story: "A distinguished gentleman dressed in a suit arrived with five passengers and asked why his organization did

not get an invite. I said 'sorry, but what organization?' The good-natured reply scared some of the organizers: 'The ANC – we may be banned but we are not dead.'"

Cronje's objective was to reach out to all, even leaders who'd opted to participate in apartheid structures, many of whom were respected in their communities but trapped by the framework. His message was: "Do not look for confrontation, get to know all." Soon, the PFP had more Black than White members in the OFS. It was the only true success of the PFP's mid-1980s "power politics/outreach" campaign.

The picture above was taken at a meeting organized by the Basotho United Party in the Black territory of QwaQwa in the OFS in 1986. Peter Gastrow is under the umbrella. Pierre Cronje is seated to his left. The BUP was one of two parties that had taken part in QwaQwa elections in 1985. The other, Dikwankwetla, had won and would go on to govern peacefully and successfully for 15 years. These movements were able to operate successfully because they were never co-opted and never became part of the security apparatus. Like Enos Mabuza in Kangwane, they used apartheid structures to fight apartheid. The key to the politics of the NDM was that it had to be inclusive and that it had to use all available structures to create leverage for peaceful change. That meant engaging with everyone, including the White far-right and Black leaders who were regarded as sell-outs.

So – back to my skill-set: what would the NDM's situation have been post its launch? First, it would have been hurt by the failure of NP members to join it; second, White voters would have been very unhappy about the failure to form a united party; but third, the NDM would have positioned itself as the only movement which was able to **operate effectively** across all political lines both **inside and outside** parliament.

v) Establishing an organization against a backdrop of even more repression

In an early test of the response to the NDM, Malan, Gastrow, Cronje, and Schoeman took their message to Natal in October. Natal's *Sunday Tribune* reported extensively on two meetings:

Sunday Tribune (25 October 1987): after meetings in Berea (Durban) and Hillcrest (Greytown)
Under the misleading headline: "Defectors put on the carpet"

*"At the first NDM meeting on the Berea, members of the 200-strong **multiracial audience** were divided in their response. Some sported PFP rosettes and **openly expressed their anger** at the two MPs who'd defected. Others **strongly supported the actions** of Mr Gastrow and Mr Cronje and congratulated them on their actions.*

"At a second report-back meeting in Hillcrest, Cronje, NDM MP for Greytown, told a less hostile audience that resigning his seat and fighting a by-election would probably result in victory for the Nationalists. 'Is that what you want?' he asked.

"Asked why they did not pursue their policies within the PFP, Pieter Schoeman said he would have loved the questioners 'to have been flies on the wall when we had our discussions in parliamentary caucus (about the meeting with the ANC in Dakar). *Maybe then you would understand why we left.'"*

Not unexpectedly, the meetings exposed the extent of the divisions in the anti-apartheid White electorate. Minutes of the NDM leadership meetings show a leadership focused on the need to build organization. In spite of voter dismay, viable organizations started to take shape in the Afrikaner suburbs and towns around Cape Town. A strong committee also formed in the central Cape Town constituency of the Gardens. Committees were taking shape in Pretoria; and, in spite of PFP anger, in both Gastrow's and Cronje's constituencies. The NDM scheduled public rallies for Pretoria in January and Cape Town in March.

On 28 January 1988, in Pretoria, a **multiracial crowd** turned out to listen to Adv. de Villiers, Wynand Malan, and guest speaker, Franklin Sonn. Sonn was a high-profile Coloured educator and diplomat from Cape Town who would never have been seen on stage with the PFP or Worrall. He later became South Africa's first democratic ambassador to the United States.

In the manner of forthright and plain-speaking South Africans, the Pretoria committee gave their leaders feedback after the meeting (NDM leadership minutes, 5 February 1988): Adv. de Villiers's introduction was too long and Malan spoke in generalities. But – Franklin Sonn was brilliant. The turnout was amazing. Malan was great at question time. Adv. de Villiers's summation was brilliant; and **it was great to see so many people of all races at a political meeting** for an organization that also had people in parliament.

People left the meeting with a sense that they were involved in something new. From an academic on the Pretoria committee (Prof. JC van Zyl) came an interesting strategic suggestion: why doesn't the NDM use its establishment power-base to start creating a non-racial South Africa by simply breaking the law? For instance, why doesn't Malan use his position as the MP for Randburg, to declare that property ownership in Randburg would henceforth be open to all races? The movement would use its establishment resources to fight for the right of any Black people who bought property in Randburg, to keep and live on it.

At that time my wife and I were quietly breaking the law in Cape Town. Working mothers in our town (Hout Bay), desperately needed daycare for their two-year-olds. Sheila opened a non-racial daycare facility for under-twos in our house. The first person to knock on our door was a Coloured woman. We took all comers – all races and all languages; and none of the Mums complained. The authorities threatened to shut Sheila down but never got around to it. That sort of small-scale institutional defiance was happening all over South Africa. People "of colour" were quietly buying and moving into homes in White neighbourhoods with White neighbours' consent. The difference in Randburg is that it would have been very high-profile – a kind of extension of Gandhi into the White middle and upper classes.

In the meantime, **repression intensified** under Botha. With the state of emergency still in place on 24 February 1988, he banned the UDF and 16 other organizations including AZAPO and the "Release Mandela Campaign." He restricted the political activity of a number of high-profile leaders including the UDF's co-leaders, Archie Gumede and Albertina Sisulu.

Extra-parliamentary leaders simply renamed what they were doing the **Mass Democratic Movement**. Mass mobilization was so endemic, that banning an organization achieved little more than making it illegal to use its name. But practical repression (limiting activists' ability to communicate or travel, violently breaking up meetings), made it very difficult for extra-parliamentary groups to organize. And while it was possible, even under the restrictions, for the NDM to meet with Mass Democratic Movement leaders, the restrictions made it difficult for the leaders to report back to their constituencies.

The NDM meeting in Cape Town took place on 9 March 1988 in a packed City Hall. Van Zyl Slabbert was a guest speaker.

Gastrow's personal archive

NDM rally in Cape Town (9 March 1988): Pieter Schoeman, Frederik van Zyl Slabbert, Adv. "Lang Dawid" de Villiers, Gastrow (nearest the camera)

Slabbert began his speech by saying that he'd left parliament because he'd thought that it was impossible to do what the NDM was trying to do. Then he criticized mainstream White liberals as represented by the PFP and Worrall:

"Not many in opposition are prepared to accept that the rules of the game have changed. On Monday 7 March, Ken Owen wrote an analysis of today's politics which I can only describe as staggering in its unreality – he makes Rip van Winkle look like an incurable insomniac (Note: Owen was the editor of South Africa's leading business daily, *Business Day*).

"In short, the article says Parliament is now back into centre focus as the forum of politics; and the PFP can now become the real alternative to the Nats and go about systematically dismantling the neo-fascist state of P.W. Botha.

*"Does he not understand what has happened to the political landscape over the last twenty-seven years? … **look at what has happened to parliament*** (Note: it had been sidelined by Botha's security regime).

"South Africa is gripped in a struggle between (competing) *forces of Nation-building… In the long run the idea of one, non-racial nation will win* (because) *the problem of control by the state is going to become increasingly problematic* (and) ***the vast majority want it**."*

I joined the NDM at the rally. I didn't tell the PFP but I did not resign. On 15 March 1988, the NDM leadership invited me to join the end of their regular planning meeting. The minutes record that there was an intense discussion between me and the leadership – about my role in the PFP, about my joining the NDM, and about my belief that the country needed a united opposition. I told Malan that I intended to remain a member of both parties. He said "fine – as long as you don't join Worrall." I told him I was also a member of *Inyandza* (Enos Mabuza's party). He smiled and shook his head.

Minutes of leadership meetings from February through May of 1988 record the leaders' successes with extra-parliamentary interactions but challenges with the mobilization of ordinary members. People understood how to organize to fight elections, but they did not know how to create inclusive political interactions at local level. Nor did they understand what was meant by "process politics." Part of the solution to the problem was to start organizing for local elections which were due to take place in October of that year. Malan suggested that the NDM should look at contesting wards in Randburg, Pretoria, Stellenbosch, and Durbanville (outside Cape Town). The NDM would have to be strategic because it would need an 80% success rate to be taken seriously. He undertook to talk to Colin Eglin (PFP leader) about a potential alliance with the PFP in key constituencies in which the NDM could do better than the PFP.

I had participated informally in some of the NDM leadership meetings during these months. At some point the PFP discovered that I'd joined the NDM. It caused some commotion in the press. Journalists wanted to know whether I would resign from the PFP. I said "no." I told the press that I intended to be a member of both organizations and that the NDM had given me permission to do so. This put the PFP in a quandary because it knew that voters wanted a united opposition; and so, it couldn't expel me without alienating voters. Ken Andrew came up with a novel formulation. "The PFP didn't expel Jannie," he said. "Jannie expelled himself when he joined the NDM."

On 16 May 1988, the NDM leadership asked me to join the leadership group and do a presentation on political trends among White voters. I began my presentation with a table that showed what had happened to electoral support for the different parties since the 1987 election (Appendix 1, table 1). Support for the PFP/NRP had peaked in 1981 at 32%. By the 1987 election in May, it had crashed to 16%. And by October 1987, it was down to 12%. Support for what the press was calling the Independent Movement (Malan and Worrall) was 13%.

The implications of these results were obvious: first, what the press called "the Independent Movement" had emerged from the election with more support than the PFP/NRP; and second, the combined support for anti-apartheid parties had recovered from the 1987 low of 16% to about 25%. But third: none of the organizations would do well in future elections by themselves. In sum: the electoral prospects for all three were bleak if divided, but bright if unified. As far as I was concerned, this meant that there were two important questions for the NDM as a movement: first, how important was electoral success; and second, if elections mattered, how might the NDM work with the others to achieve an electoral presence?

I followed the questions up by talking about what had happened as a result of the formation of the NDM: the PFP/NRP had retained 12%, but the independents had split between support for Worrall, 9%; and support for the NDM, 3%. Unless it grew, the NDM would struggle to win seats in a White election. I reinforced this analysis with a second table (Appendix 1, table 2). It showed support for the three organizations in six key constituencies in Natal. A divided opposition would probably lose all six constituencies to the NP. A united opposition (PFP + NRP + Worrall + NDM) would win five of the six.

As a member of the NDM I would have been happy to swallow hard, put my head down, and work for long-term success. But I never sugarcoat the results of survey research; and the research was very explicit: as things stood, without a credible electoral pact, anti-apartheid opposition would do very badly in an election. I believed that it mattered for the NDM because I did not think that we would be taken seriously by the ANC and others, if we failed to show, through elections, that we had support from Whites and Afrikaners. The NDM had no doubt that the country could not be saved without a political process that **transcended the "system/struggle" divide**. But the upcoming municipal elections would put its ability to survive to the test.

vi) Van Zyl Slabbert's initiative and NDM discussions with the ANC in Frankfurt

Less than a week after my presentation came what the *Sunday Times* described as a "bombshell." On 22 May 1988, its front-page headline was about van Zyl Slabbert returning to Parliament:

"*Former Opposition leader Frederik van Zyl Slabbert has dropped a political bombshell*," the *Sunday Times* wrote, "*he has plans for a political comeback in Parliament. The name of the game is 'participation strategy' – the mobilisation of left of centre movements from Mr Wynand Malan's NDM to the UDF – to seek office in parliamentary structures."*

Slabbert's strategy was based on the idea that winners of elections to apartheid structures would be in a position to destroy them. He had talked to a wide range of extra-parliamentary groups about the idea including the UDF, COSATU, and the Natal Indian Congress. Malan's NDM was supportive. Worrall's IP hadn't been consulted but Worrall expressed "cautious" approval. The PFP hadn't been consulted, but noted that Slabbert was vindicating its view that one should participate in the system, even if it was flawed.

Crucially, Slabbert had not consulted the ANC in exile. A day or two later he invited the NDM to join him in a meeting with the ANC in Frankfurt. It was a Slabbert initiative sponsored by Mme Mitterrand, wife of the French president. The NDM delegation was Malan, Lategan, Cronje, Pakendorf, and me. As always, my role would be to talk about what South Africans were thinking. We left on 25 May. We met with Thabo Mbeki, Jacob Zuma, Aziz Pahad, and Tony Seedat of the ANC. Mbeki and Zuma would later become South Africa's second and third presidents. Tony Seedat was the ANC's representative in Germany.

The first few hours of the meeting were devoted to Slabbert's presentation of his new strategy. He drew attention to what he called two strategic deadlocks:

> First: *"Whites… are trapped between the growth of the "right-wing" and the* ***rejection of all political structures*** *by the extra-parliamentary mass movements. Thus, whites who are potentially available to support a non-racial democracy find themselves in a* ***strategic deadlock****."*
>
> Second: "the state has **effectively crushed mass mobilization politics** … (and) the vast majority of people… in the extra-parliamentary arena **are not drawn** to violent confrontation. Thus, their commitment to a non-racial democracy finds itself in a **strategic deadlock**."

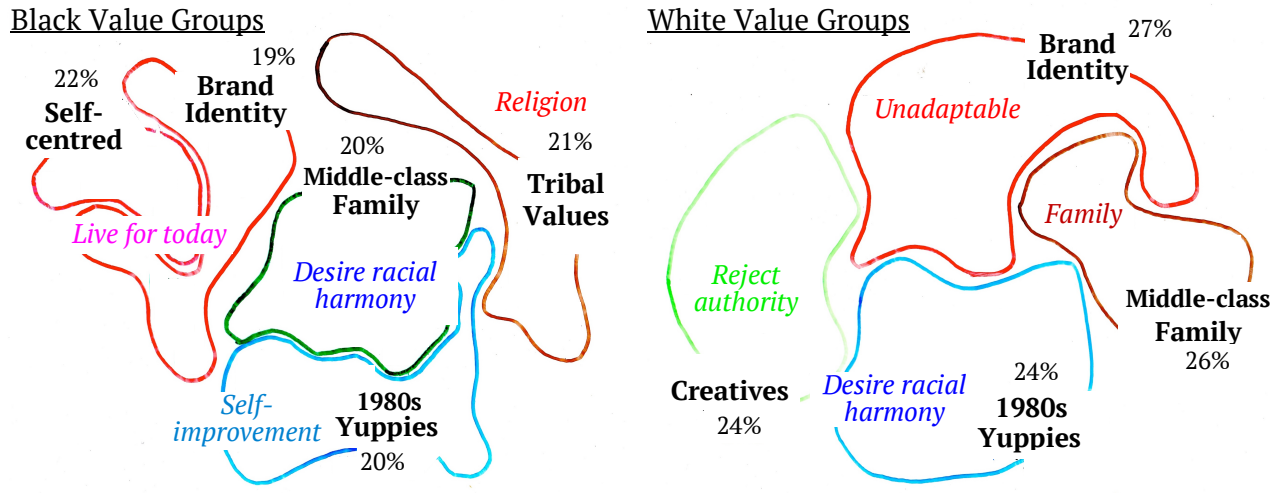
His proposal was to form a new party called the **Free Democratic Party of South Africa**. Its strategy would be to participate in elections for all government structures in order to win control. "Botha's strategy of **repression and co-option** has worked," he said. But the past few years had proven that the ANC/UDF had a critical mass of support in the country. It could leverage that support to win electoral control of apartheid structures – starting (crucially) – with the upcoming municipal elections. This would give the ANC a formidable legal presence inside South Africa. Once apartheid had been dismantled, the new party could fold and each organization could go its separate ideological way.

I agreed with Slabbert about the strategic deadlock. I also agreed that the UDF/MDM/ANC could pull off a political coup by standing in the municipal elections. Success would make it very difficult for Botha to govern. But the concept of a party of convenience to be disbanded after the process was complicated and impractical. As it happens, the proposal quickly became moot. In a soft and sympathetic voice, Thabo Mbeki told Slabbert that he was too late. A decision had already been taken to boycott the election. Slabbert quickly lost interest. At the break, he left the meeting. To be fair, he did have other appointments. Once he'd gone, we took over.

Malan asked me to open by talking about what South Africans were thinking. I had decided to use a market research tool called "Sociomonitor." It established South Africans' motivations and values by asking people to agree-disagree with simple statements like '*family is all important to me*' or '*I try to get on well with people of all races.'* It then used a statistical technique called factor analysis to group people according to their values. Typical values included "a desire for racial harmony," "commitment to family," "commitment to tradition," and so on. I adapted Sociomonitor for my presentation. Figure 1 is the picture I presented of South Africans in 1988. It was the first slide in my deck. What does it mean?

Figure 1: A depiction of South Africans' personal and social values

Author's drawing. The data was supplied by Sociomonitor



Black South Africans fell into five value groups. I called them Self-centred (22%), Brand Identity (19%), Middle-class Family (20%), Yuppies (17%), and Tribal Values (21%). Whites fell into four – three of which were the same as the Blacks: Brand Identity (27%), Middle-class Family (26%), and Yuppies (24%). The fourth was the Creatives (24%).

The names were an attempt to describe what each group was like. Let's start with the three that were common to Blacks and Whites: **Middle-class Family**, **Brand Identity**, and **Yuppies**. **Middle-class Family** were your classical, family- and community-oriented, mostly middle- and working-class people with classical, conservative family values. **Brand Identity** were status-conscious but not necessarily wealthy people who used brands (drinks like Coca-Cola, cars like BMW) to make a statement about their identity. **Yuppies** was a popular description in the 1980s for ambitious young, upwardly mobile professionals. Black **Tribal Values** were essentially rural Blacks with traditional values. White **Creatives** were essentially grown-up hippies. The **Self-centred** were alienated, urban Black youth.

I used the results to derive predictions about how the groups would behave politically (see Appendix 1, table 3). This is what I said:

> The Black **Tribal Values** and White **Middle-class Family** (outlined in the table in **Grey**) form a single political grouping because their values suggested an important political fact about them: they will **follow their leaders**. They value authority and want peace. They don't particularly want racial harmony, but they **will not be an obstacle to a negotiated democracy** because they will do what their leaders do. They make up about 25% of the population.
>
> For purposes of **non-racial, democratic nation building**, the bedrock will be the three groups that are patriotic and that value peace and racial harmony. They are the Black **Middle-class Family** and the Black and White **Yuppies** (outlined in the table in **Blue**). They make up about 37% of the Black population and 24% of Whites. The White **Creatives** (24%) could join them because they also value peace and racial harmony. But they don't have a strong commitment to "country." Many might be

thinking of emigrating (as it happens, I was one in 1985 – I hated authority, bigotry, and violence – and I thought of myself as a human being first; and as a South African, only second).

Conclusion: the **Leader-led** and **Racial harmony** groups (roughly 59% of Blacks and 50-74% of Whites) constituted **a critical mass for non-racial democracy**.

The most problematic groups were the White and Black **Brand Identity** and the Black **Self-centred** groups (outlined in table 3 in **Red**). I headed the slide that I used to talk about these three groups "**Crippling Divisions**." The divisions weren't crippling, but they were highly problematic: White **Brand Identity** were aggressive and had **zero interest** in racial harmony! And the Black **Brand Identity** and **Self-centred** were so alienated by chaos and repression that they focused quite selfishly on their own narrow interests. All three were low on "desire for racial harmony" and had little sense of "nation." I said to two future presidents: "It will be relatively easy for the state to co-opt many of these people with money."

My key conclusions were: there was a critical mass for non-racial transformation in South Africa. But there were sizeable racist (White) and self-centred (Black) elements that could quite easily be mobilized to cause chaos. "Even if South Africa were to achieve a negotiated, non-racial democracy," I said, "these groups will make the country **very hard to govern**."

The politicians took over once I was done. There was a long discussion about the NDM's more inclusive approach to politics (no "system/struggle" divide). Cronje talked about the political work that he'd been doing with Black activists in the Orange Free State and QwaQwa. My notes became the basis for the NDM's record of the meeting. Here's what I wrote:

> An extraordinary running debate took place in which a variety of (political) alternatives was explored. These involved the theme that while grand participation (in the local elections) was out, there may be opportunities under special circumstances in which **participation** (in apartheid structures) would be possible.
>
> Mbeki: "*Participation should be viewed with a tactical eye – if community structures (COSATU, UDF) can be persuaded to participate, then this possibility should be explored.*
>
> "*There is nothing to prevent the NDM from canvassing for members and participating. However, if this is done against the wishes of community structures, then the representatives of the NDM can expect to pick up problems* (Zuma and Pahad agreed).
>
> "*Joint mobilization of black and white under an NDM banner for the purposes of elections to white structures was entirely acceptable* (Zuma and Pahad agreed).
>
> "*In areas like QwaQwa where there was no ANC presence, there could be no objection to NDM mobilization with a view to participation* (Zuma and Pahad agreed)."
>
> Zuma: "*Perhaps under conditions of joint membership, for instance, of NDM and UDF, there could be participation*."
>
> Mbeki: "*You cannot simply take a ship and force it to do a 180-degree turn overnight. It will take time to reverse the (extra-parliamentary) boycott tradition.*"

In the context of the polarization in South Africa at the time, this was an incredible accomplishment by my colleagues. As I noted in the conclusion of my document, our research

had given a shape to the potential for a negotiated future; but also explained why Botha's strategy of repression and co-option could succeed. The State had already proven that it could recruit and arm vigilante forces. Although none of us believed that it would succeed over the long run, there was a risk that Botha could successfully buy time to build a multiracial coalition for a race-based and fragmented democracy. Our view was that the only hope for future success was a politics that broke the mould. It was all about using all possible peaceful means, including participation in apartheid structures, to destroy apartheid. At one point one of the members of the ANC delegation (I think it was Zuma) said, "*it's a pity that you didn't come to see us sooner.*" Where Slabbert had failed, our team had succeeded.

After the meeting we released the usual, quite anodyne press statement. We agreed to a) a non-racial, multi-party democracy; b) protection of language, religion, and culture; c) a truly non-racial constitution with protections for individual rights; and finally, d) the importance of an inclusive process that recognized the right of all South Africans to be part of the solution.

During our meeting, the ANC's military wing detonated two bombs in Pretoria. Fortunately, no-one was killed. That night Malan visited Mbeki in his hotel room to talk about the bombing. Mbeki undertook to intensify the discipline that the ANC had been trying to impose on its operatives. After that there was one more bombing that killed civilians – the Ellis Park bomb. The operatives apologized and explained that they'd botched the timing. After that there were no more incidents of White civilians being targeted.

vii) The creation of the Democratic Party

Local elections took place across South Africa on 26 October 1988. According to the newspaper *Southscan* (26 October), 7,229 seats were at stake in 1,071 local authorities. 1,851 seats were in Black areas. It was a giant exercise in Botha's vision for a fragmented, race-based democracy. The country had become comparatively stable through Botha's mobilization of South African security forces. It was therefore an opportunity for the regime to test its strategy of repression and co-option. The MDM/ANC called for a boycott.

When judged by the turnout, the Black elections were a failure. Fewer than half of the 1,851 seats were contested; and the turnout in contested seats was abysmal. Many Blacks who were eligible to vote didn't bother to register. And those who had registered didn't bother to vote. In the ten townships in Natal, for instance, only 8.4% of those who'd registered to vote actually turned out. When you include potential voters who hadn't registered, the turnout was less than 1% (*New Nation*, 9 November 1988)! But 796 seats were filled by lone candidates and only 138 of the 1,851 seats had no candidates. So, while the turnout had been low, Botha's government had succeeded in populating 93% (1,713) of the seats with people that it could declare had been "elected."

The turnout was also very poor in Indian areas. Polls in Durban ranged from 6% to 25%. In the Transvaal, the Transvaal Indian Congress estimated that about 19% had voted (*Weekly Mail*, 3 November 1988).

In Coloured areas, voter turnout varied. In rural towns turnout was good – more or less what one would expect in a normal local government election. But in Mitchell's Plain, Cape Town's biggest Coloured suburb and the birthplace of the UDF, turnout was less than 20%.

The White elections were important for the signals they sent about who Whites were supporting. The Konserwatiewe Party made significant gains, especially in the Transvaal. The divided PFP/IP/NDM weren't in a position to fight on party political platforms. So, most anti-apartheid candidates stood as independents (with a small "i"). Where it made sense, we formed alliances. In Pretoria a mostly NDM-PFP alliance contested four seats under the banner "Pretoria 2000." And a PFP-IP-NDM alliance contested 11 seats in Durban under the banner "Durban 2000." All won their elections. Johannesburg was the only area in which the PFP decided to go it alone under a PFP banner. It did not do well. For the first time in the city's history, Botha's National Party became the majority party in the Johannesburg City Council.

Prior to the election, the NDM and PFP had begun a series of meetings at the corporate headquarters of a company called Seardel in Cape Town. I don't have a record of how many meetings there were, but I have a clear memory of our strategy. Everyone knew by then that we were electorally weak. So, we had to prove our extra-parliamentary reach. At every meeting we were accompanied by a heavyweight member of the UDF/MDM. For instance, at the third meeting (I think it was the third) we had Cyril Ramaphosa (currently South Africa's president) sitting on our side of the table. Ramaphosa was the secretary-general of South Africa's most powerful union, the National Union of Mineworkers. The UDF/MDM leaders came with us, not because they had joined the NDM, but to make a point about **how to conduct transformational politics** so that we could start the process of rebuilding South Africa without waiting for the government. It became clear to the PFP and Worrall, that the NDM was the only organization that could create these kinds of political interaction.

Our talks with the PFP helped to create municipal election alliances. Fifteen days before the election, we sent the following communique to our members:

"You probably read in the press recently about the discussions that took place between NDM leadership and… the PFP.

"We issued the following joint statement: '… a broad measure of agreement on the nature of the country's problems was found. The experience of both parties is that there exists a basic desire among most South Africans to work for a common future…'"

By November 1988, there was considerable pressure from both the public and business for the NDM, PFP, and IP to merge. Exploratory talks took place at the home of Louis Luyt, the president of the South African Rugby Board. The meeting was chaired by Willem de Klerk, the

inner-circle Afrikaner who'd originally coined the terms "verlig" and "verkramp" in 1966. De Klerk was also the brother of the Transvaal NP leader, F.W. de Klerk.

After the talks, the three organizations issued the following press statement:

> It was agreed that the 3 parties would endeavour to bring about the formation of a new political party, which is felt to be needed. The objective of the party will be to promote the broad principles of a non-racial, multi-party democratic order (to be achieved) through negotiation.
>
> The senior leaders of the 3 parties commit themselves to encourage discussions at all levels within their organizations; and with other organizations inside and outside parliament. A **committee comprising representatives of each party** will be appointed to prepare a declaration of intent, and to determine **strategies** and **structures**.

The PFP appointed Colin Eglin and Tiaan van der Merwe to the committee. Jannie Momberg and David Gant represented the IP. Esther Lategan and I represented the NDM. A meeting was set for 14 December. The NDM was very clear about its goals:

i) To ensure that NDM members would preserve their political credibility in a merger in spite of the fact that the new party would include many senior members who had no extra-parliamentary credibility;
ii) To preserve the NDM's inclusive program of political interaction with all organizations – from talks with purist Afrikaners to talks with communists like Johnny Issel;
iii) To ensure that the NDM's senior leaders had leadership positions in the new organization that were equal in influence to what they'd had in the NDM.

Although our electoral relevance was small, we had a strong negotiating position because we were the only one who could transcend the "system/struggle" divide.

Prior to the December 1988 meeting, the Independent Party sent the NDM a letter of demands. It was addressed to Adv. de Villiers and copied to Louis Luyt, Willem de Klerk, Zach de Beer (who had replaced Eglin as the PFP leader), and Denis Worrall (IP leader), but not Wynand Malan! I mention it because it helps to highlight why Malan and Worrall had split in the first place. The letter began by saying that Worrall had led the IP to more support among White voters than either the PFP or the NDM. By that time, the IP's claim to be the biggest was no longer true – the PFP had taken a small lead in the polls. The letter went on to require "urgent answers" to certain questions:

"Does the NDM accept that the most important short-term objective for the proposed new party would be to attempt to remove the National Party from power by bringing about a 'hung' parliament?

"The IP believes that there are certain black leaders who can most effectively reassure whites about their future… we believe that if these leaders associated themselves with the new party, it would greatly enhance its potential… In this regard we refer in particular to Chief Buthelezi and the various political parties ***in the tricameral system****.*

"The IP and other leaders (Zach de Beer) and parties have adopted Inkatha's 'statement of belief' as a value basis for cooperation. Would the NDM be prepared to do the same?

"With respect to the type of economy that the new party would support, we ourselves advocate a market-related free enterprise system… this is such an important feature of any future democratic South Africa we would wish this to be incorporated unambiguously in the new party's statement of principles."

The letter concluded by asking Adv. de Villiers to fax a response to the questions by the end of the week.

It was classic "either-or" politics. The NDM answer to every question was obviously "no"! There was no way that we would commit to going for a hung parliament at the expense of our larger objective of creating the foundation for a non-racial democracy through inclusive political activity; and there was no way that we were going to pre-empt constitutional negotiations by agreeing to Inkatha's statement of belief at the expense of any other statement of belief (for example, the Freedom Charter). Nor were we going to commit to relationships with "system" leaders at the expense of "struggle" leaders. And we were obviously not going to agree to a centre-right economic agenda.

In the event, Adv. de Villiers responded simply by directing the Worrall team to the statement of intent after the first round of talks. The follow-up meeting went ahead on 14 December 1988. As a result of the meeting, the three parties agreed to launch a new party. The launch date would be April 1989. It would be called the Democratic Party. The launch would start the actual merger process (of assets, local and regional structures, etc.) based on an agreed party constitution and strategy. The party would hold its first congress later in 1989. In February, the NDM's Pierre Cronje prepared a strategy document for the party.

A summary of Democratic Party Strategy
Prepared for the DP by Cronje prior to the launch in April

Context: some comments about the situation in South Africa

The government is not prepared to negotiate a democratic system without group representation; but for the majority of South Africans, apartheid in any form is not negotiable.

For as long as black extra-parliamentary politics are conducted in such a way as to feed (government propaganda), Whites will seek refuge in the security action of the state.

The search for convergence of ideals and a shared vision of the future cannot wait until the government is defeated, either at the polls or on the battlefield.

Comment: Cronje was drawing attention to the counter-productive consequences of the "system/struggle" divide. Botha's strategy would not survive the test of time, but the country couldn't wait for Botha to be defeated – whether at the polls or in a guerrilla war.

Cronje went on:

Transformation/Reconstruction

The reconstruction of South African society can start now. **All South Africans** can be involved in an **inclusive process of negotiation** in the search for shared values; and the building of mutual respect; and the developing of a (common) future vision.

Comment: this is a critically important paragraph because it's a three-line summary of why the NDM had formed in the first place. Let's unpack it.

Multi-party democracies succeed when they are underpinned by shared values and a common commitment to country that transcends ideological party differences. That foundation is why people accept electoral outcomes – they go home after an electoral defeat, pick up the pieces, and fight on peacefully until the next election. We South Africans had not had a chance to develop this common sense of who we were and what we wanted. And the "system/struggle" polarization of the power players (Botha's government on the one hand; and the MDM/ANC on the other) was profoundly destructive of any attempt to develop a common foundation.

The NDM's politics was based on a belief that South Africa did not have to wait for Botha. We could immediately begin to create interactions that would help South Africans to discover that they had common aspirations for the future. In this way we aimed to build the networks of trust throughout the country and across all democratic ideologies to provide the social glue that makes democracies work.

But one also has to be realistic – political organizations will only be taken seriously if they have a prospect of power. Hence the next paragraph in Cronje's strategy document:

> The DP will fight elections with the purpose of exerting influence and gaining control in Parliament and other statutory bodies where the power is seated to commence formal negotiations and formalise the new order.

Four days before the launch of the DP, big delegations of the three organizations met to ratify the DP's strategy and constitution. They chose Adv. de Villiers to chair the meeting. There was only one contentious issue: leadership. The PFP wanted a single elected leader – because, so they said, triumvirates had a bad record in history. They mentioned Rome! The IP began by arguing that there should be one leader and it should be Worrall. When it realized that Worrall would probably lose a leadership contest against the PFP's Zach de Beer, it switched and supported the NDM. We argued that the new party would need three leaders in order to unite the three groups of supporters. Our argument won. The delegates ratified a new party constitution drawn up by a constitutional expert from the University of South Africa, Prof. Marinus Wiechers:

The constitution of the Democratic Party

> **Preamble**
>
> The Democratic Party believes that all South Africans share a common desire for peace, freedom, justice, and prosperity…
>
> The cultural diversity of our people is a national asset which can be developed in a spirit of mutual respect, tolerance, and conciliation. South Africa has natural and human resources which can provide for the material needs of all our people…

A **process** must be set in motion which will establish trust, mutual understanding and convergence towards a shared future as the basis for a peaceful negotiated settlement.

The Party's Principles

The protection of fundamental human rights and liberties…
Representative government on the basis of a general adult franchise for all South Africans…
An independent judiciary and the Rule of Law; the maintenance of law, order, and security…
Limitation of the authority of the central government by the establishment of local authorities…
Negotiation to facilitate the orderly transition to a fully participative democracy…
The rejection of violence as a political instrument…
Sound labour relations based on free collective bargaining…

On the matter of economic policy, the party's constitution recognized the need for both private enterprise and the elimination of poverty. The language was fuzzy enough to accommodate the social democracy of the NDM and liberal capitalism of the PFP-IP.

The constitution created a Board to run the party until its first national congress. The Board consisted of 23 members with roughly equal representation from each of the organizations and Adv. de Villiers in the chair. The constitution also created a policy advisory committee of four members: Willem de Klerk (policy formulation and development); Frederik van Zyl Slabbert (political analysis and strategy); Prof. Marinus Wiechers (constitutional development and planning); Prof. Sampie Terreblanche (economic analysis and policy). The alert reader may notice the prominence of NDM people.

Headlines across the world noted the formation of the new party. An article from *The New York Times* was typical (9 April 1989):

"A new political party met officially today in preparation for a general election to be held around September. Its major component is the Progressive Federal Party… (It) *will also include the more recently formed National Democratic Movement and the Independent Party.*

"A fourth, more loosely defined grouping, consists of disaffected Afrikaners who have not yet found a political home, led by Willem A. De Klerk, who is the brother of F. W. De Klerk, the new National Party leader."

The NYT quoted the leaders as saying that they expected to win up to 40 seats in the upcoming election. Oscar Dhlomo of Inkatha attended the launch. But the paper noted that "Other black organizations had adopted a wait-and-see attitude."

The Democratic Party formed an **Interaction Committee** chaired by the NDM's Peter Gastrow to engage with extra-parliamentary organizations. Prominent members included Esther Lategan and Pierre Cronje. The merger secured the likelihood that the NDM's parliamentarians would be re-elected. Finally, the merger secured the continued involvement of high-profile NP defectors like Sampie Terreblanche and Willem de Klerk. On paper at least, the Democratic Party was committed to continuing the NDM's process politics – **participation in elected structures** and **interaction with all relevant organizations**. I

thought the NDM had come out of the merger process in good shape. We knew that the DP wasn't the NDM. But I believed that the DP's constitution and structure with key NDM people in leadership positions, had created the critical mass that was needed to preserve the politics of the NDM in the DP.

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Glossary for Chapter 5: In the Meantime, Secret Talks

Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress (1912 to the present – name changed to ANC in 1923).
DA	Democratic Alliance (2000 to the present).
DP	Democratic Party formed by the merger of the PFP, NDM, and IP (1989-2000).
IDASA	Institute for a Democratic Alternative in South Africa.
IP	Worrall's Independent Party (1988-1989).
MDM	Mass Democratic Movement (successor to the banned UDF).
MK	the ANC's military wing, uMkhonto we Sizwe.
NDM	National Democratic Movement (1987-1989).
NIS	National Intelligence Service.
PFP	Progressive Federal Party (1977-1989).
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
UDF	United Democratic Front (1983-1988).

Truth and Reconciliation Commission: the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established in 1995 with a mandate to make a testimonial record of "gross abuses of human rights" between 1960 and 1994. There were 17 commissioners led by Bishop Desmond Tutu. It gave both victims and perpetrators a chance to tell their stories; and attempted to record abuses by all sides, not just the apartheid state. Abuses by the state made up the bulk of the testimony.

Chapter 5
In the Meantime, Secret Talks

I've noted how despondent non-racial South African democrats were after the 1987 election. Botha's government was committed to a strategy of repression and co-option and it looked as though it might work, at least for some time. In June, against this backdrop, Michael Young (Consolidated Goldfields) and Oliver Tambo had agreed to try back-channel negotiations between inner-circle Afrikaners and the ANC. Young asked a South African journalist living in London, Fleur de Villiers, to find Afrikaners. She approached Willie Esterhuyse of Stellenbosch's Discussion Group 85. The first talks took place in Marlow, England, on 1 November 1987. Let's contextualize these talks.

Stellenbosch independents had met in February at Esterhuyse's house to consider fielding an independent candidate for the election. Esther Lategan had offered to stand. The election had occurred in May. The Young-Tambo meeting took place in June. Slabbert's Dakar conference took place in July. The NDM launched in October. The Democratic Party was still more than a year away. But in November, Esterhuyse was in England with fellow Discussion Group 85 academics, Sampie Terreblanche and Willie Breytenbach, for secret talks with the ANC.

The two sides met multiple times in the next twenty-two months. The November 1987 talks were followed by talks in February, August, and December of 1988; and in April and September of 1989. In February, Esterhuyse was accompanied by Terreblanche and Marinus Wiechers. In August and December, Willem de Klerk replaced Marinus Wiechers. Terreblanche was a high-profile member of the NDM. De Klerk was facilitating the creation of the DP. In essence, through 1988, members or supporters of the NDM/future DP were negotiating in secret with the ANC.

Aziz Pahad of the ANC's London office led the ANC's November delegation. He was accompanied by Tony Trew, Wally Serote, and Harold Wolpe. Thabo Mbeki took over in February. He, Pahad, and Trew then became the ANC team. I have based my summary of these meetings on ANC documents, the ANC's copy of the Michael Young archive which is housed at the Borthwick Institute of archives, and Esterhuyse's book, Endgame (2012).

i) Secret meetings with the ANC: 1 November 1987 – 17 December 1988

We start with the exploratory meeting in November (Gerhart and Glaser, 2010, pp. 637-640). This is how the ANC summarized a situation analysis by Breytenbach:

"In the 2 years before the election, the mass struggle had raised doubts about the NP's ability to govern… (but) *the* ***relevance of the*** (1987) ***election*** (lay) *in the fact that* (it) *was an endorsement of the* ***rule of the 'securocrats.'*** *…parliament* (had) *become irrelevant…*

*"… **security measures have diminished two of the ANC's three options** – mass mobilization and the creation of alternative structures… The ANC can still prosecute the armed struggle but in doing so it is deploying its weakest arm against the regime at its strongest point."*

In other words, Botha's security establishment believed it was winning. In any potential negotiation, what South Africa's National Intelligence Service would want to know was: would the ANC guarantee group (i.e. White) rights and accept a federal constitution for a new South Africa? According to Breytenbach, the NIS was planning to release political prisoners in coming months as a sign of its confidence. **It would not demand that the ANC give up the armed struggle**. As the ANC's record notes:

"It is clear that this (position) *is taken from what is believed to be a position of strength and in a situation in which it is believed that* ***the ANC has little room for manoeuvre****."*

By releasing political prisoners, the NIS believes that *"the way will be open to make viable the 'reformist' measures and in that way weaken the position of the ANC especially if it stays outside the 'reformed' structures."*

In summary, Breytenbach appears to have painted a picture in which Botha and his security establishment were confidently plotting South Africa's future. That future included negotiation. The ANC had an option: it could either be part of the negotiation or it could risk being marginalized by staying outside. At one point, according to the document, Breytenbach even suggested that the ANC should allow itself to be co-opted!

For its part the ANC repeated its core positions: one-person one-vote in a unitary state with a Bill of Rights for individuals. The fact that political prisoners were going to be released and that the ANC did not have to renounce the armed struggle, meant that there would only be two ANC obstacles to negotiations: the state of emergency and banned organizations. To the visible consternation of Serote and Wolpe (according to Esterhuyse), Pahad told the Afrikaners that the ANC was committed to the possibility of negotiations.

After the talks Esterhuyse was sceptical about the potential for progress (2012, p. 103). He believed that both Botha and the ANC were only using talks as a strategy to harvest intelligence information and create divisions "in the enemy." Breytenbach had presented an explicit analysis of how Botha and his securocrats were dividing Black South Africa. And although the ANC had added negotiation to its armoury, it had done so mainly as a weapon of revolution.

The talks resumed in February 1988. The Afrikaner delegation was Esterhuyse, Terreblanche, and Wiechers. The ANC was led by Mbeki accompanied by Pahad and Trew. In terms of context, the NDM had just formed and was wrestling with the challenge of constituency organization. Worrall's Independent Party had briefly become the biggest electoral block in the fragmented White opposition. And the commentariat was talking about the end of the PFP.

Here's a summary of some key points from the second meeting:

- Esterhuyse had been asked by the NIS to keep it in the loop. He'd asked Mbeki and Mbeki had agreed. In other words, **South Africa's intelligence services were now eavesdropping**.

- According to Young, Mbeki described the ANC as a movement that could **splinter into multiple parties** after a negotiated settlement.
- By that time, Mbeki had become critical of IDASA-type meetings because they didn't involve people who had their hands on the levers of state power.

According to Esterhuyse the talks took place against a backdrop of significant tensions in the ANC between negotiators like Mbeki and revolutionaries like Hani. And according to Young, Botha's government was at least as divided as the ANC – between hardline securocrats in the police and the more pragmatic military and NIS. But in a sign of the Botha government's relentless commitment to repression and co-option, the government banned the UDF and sixteen other organizations on the first day of the talks. Esterhuyse, however, became more optimistic (2012, p. 133):

"During the meeting… I abandoned most of my reservations about the (talks). *For a considerable time, the ANC had interpreted talks as a way of creating divisions in the camp of the 'enemy'. But* (Mbeki's) *participation… convinced me that he, Pahad and Trew were taking a broader approach.* (They had realized that) *divisions among 'the enemy' would not bring the enemy down."*

Within a month of these talks and unknown to Esterhuyse, P.W. Botha had instructed his director of National Intelligence, Niel Barnard, to lead a small team of government functionaries in secret talks with Mandela. Not even Botha's cabinet was to know because, as Barnard pointed out in an O'Malley interview (1998): it would take "less than two minutes" for South Africa's garrulous foreign minister, Pik Botha, to be on the phone to his friends at the Washington Post to tell them about the secret talks! The purpose of the Mandela talks was to obtain "*more information… concerning the aims* (and) *potential approachability of* (the ANC's) *different leaders and groupings*" (O'Malley archive, Spaarwater interview, 2003). Botha had three questions:

i. Would it be possible to negotiate a kind of ceasefire prior to negotiations? That would mitigate the need to demand that the ANC drop the armed struggle.
ii. Did Mandela believe in multi-party democracy? Could group protections be built into the constitution?
iii. Given that Mandela was a member of the Communist Party, to what extent was communist ideology playing a role in Mandela's thinking?

I am not going to summarize the Mandela meetings. Many people have written about them (See, for instance, Kruger 2005 and Jolobe 2014). What interests me is that, whatever he might have been saying in public, P.W. Botha knew about and supported the Mbeki/Esterhuyse meetings (Young memo, 31 May 1988). And so the regime now had two contact points into ANC thinking: Mbeki/Esterhuyse and Mandela/Barnard. The ANC, in turn, was getting excellent feedback from people like George Bizos about the Mandela meetings. This meant that there were two small groups of people who knew who was saying what to whom: South Africa's NIS and Botha; and Mbeki and his inner circle.

Our Frankfurt meeting with the ANC had taken place in May 1988 – the same month as the first of the Mandela/Barnard meetings. That was also the month in which Young's memo made it clear that Botha and the NIS were invested in the Mbeki/Esterhuyse meetings.

Mbeki and Esterhuyse met for the third time in August 1988. This time the Afrikaner delegation included Willem de Klerk, the brother of F.W. de Klerk (the Transvaal leader of the National Party). By this time, according to Young, the NIS/Botha had decided to use the Mbeki/Esterhuyse meetings to "make certain proposals" to the ANC. The mood was sombre because of Botha's relentless repression. Yet the group made significant progress on key issues. For instance (Young meeting minutes):

- The release of Nelson Mandela: Botha's government had trapped itself by insisting that Mandela renounce violence. The NIS/Botha wanted to know what the ANC thought about the possibility of releasing Mandela on humanitarian grounds. They could argue that he was ill.
- Violence: the Afrikaners pointed out that the violence had had significant negative impacts – it had made Whites less willing to change and it divided the Black community. Mbeki went into a lengthy explanation of the difficulties that the ANC was having with discipline.

By this time, as Young noted, both sides had developed a better understanding of the extent to which some of the violence was beyond anyone's control.

Willem de Klerk presented an analysis of how he thought White politics might evolve. He believed that the NP would split within five years (remember, this was the person who would facilitate the formation of the DP). What one might loosely call "progressive factions" would then constitute about 60% of the White population. Democratic transformation would then become possible as long as the progressive factions united. With the benefit of hindsight we now know that he was right about the NP – it would disintegrate. But he was wrong about the timing: democratic transformation would begin a lot sooner because of his brother's speech on 2 February 1990; and the speech itself would help to keep the NP in play for longer than five years.

The two sides agreed that South Africa should not accept mediators in any future negotiations; and they agreed that while events like the Dakar conference were important, they had little relevance when it came to power. Esterhuyse notes that the meeting was by far the most substantive to that date. He left feeling that the negotiation faction in the ANC (Mbeki) was beating out the revolutionary faction (Hani). He notes that he and de Klerk pondered the possibility that it was the repressive pressure from Botha that was forcing the ANC off its revolutionary track (2012, p. 152).

In October 1988, the NDM reached a formal cooperation agreement with the PFP; and NDM-PFP-IP candidates did well in local elections under an anti-apartheid alliance banner. Pierre Cronje and his colleagues had decided that it would be too much bother to change everyone's membership from PFP to NDM in the Orange Free State. And so, under the leadership of Cronje and his OFS team (Cas Human and Marlene Webber) – and with the consent of the

UDF/MDM/ANC – the PFP participated in and won local elections in a Black town outside Harrismith called 42nd Hill. In the context of nationwide boycotts, it was a significant achievement. According to Cronje, the PFP leadership never appreciated what its OFS members had accomplished or understood how they'd done so.

Also in October, IDASA organized another meeting of anti-apartheid South Africans, this time, in Leverkusen (West Germany). The meeting was notable for the fact that its chairperson, Alex Boraine, refused a request from Botha's government to attend as observers. As Esterhuyse notes (2012, p. 92), it was a doomed attempt by Boraine to make IDASA central to the attempt to solve South Africa's problems.

In December, with Willem de Klerk in the chair, the NDM, PFP, and IP agreed to form the Democratic Party. Two days later, de Klerk was back in the UK with Esterhuyse and Terreblanche for the fourth set of talks with the ANC. And so we had this odd situation: high profile members of the newly formed Democratic Party were talking to the ANC on behalf of South Africa with P.W. Botha's support but without the knowledge of the DP!

The December talks were notable for a number of reasons:

- In spite of Botha's interest in the talks, Esterhuyse believed that Botha would not deviate from his vision of a fragmented multiracial democracy.
- De Klerk therefore argued for the importance of the Democratic Party. He believed that it offered a genuine alternative to the NP for as long as Botha was in charge of the country.
- Mbeki showed a real interest in the DP's potential to drive transformation. He had a lot of respect for Malan and Lategan, but not for Worrall, whom he described as "an opportunist."

At one point (according to Esterhuyse), Mbeki pointedly asked de Klerk whether the DP would use its parliamentary platform to counter Botha's propaganda and educate White South Africans about the ANC. Knowing that the DP included many conservative liberals, de Klerk was quite vague in his response (2012, p. 163).

Off the record, Esterhuyse noted that Mbeki had expressed a deep fear about **the potential for corruption** and the emergence of a **corrupt Black elite** if a future, non-racial government couldn't **solve the problem of poverty** (Esterhuyse, 2012, p. 165). He was right.

ii) F.W. de Klerk takes over as leader of the National Party

In January 1989, P.W. Botha had a mild stroke. He decided to give up the leadership of the NP, but to stay on as president. He continued to run the country with his security management team, but F.W. de Klerk was elected to lead the NP ahead of the securocrats' first choice, Barend du Plessis. De Klerk was known to be antagonistic towards securocratic government. It was the beginning of the end of Botha's security-oriented attempt to manufacture a future South Africa through repression and reform.

The fifth Mbeki/Esterhuyse talks took place in April 1989 (just two weeks after the launch of the DP). Naturally, the two sides talked about the NP's new leader, F.W. de Klerk. His brother, Willem de Klerk, led the discussion.

Willem de Klerk does not seem to have known what his brother would do. He outlined four possibilities from "shift to the right" to "radical change." He chose the third as the most likely – **a progressive shift to the left** (2012, p. 191). He noted that his brother had no time for the security option. He said that his brother was a pragmatist who relied on the advice of an inner-circle of business people and politicians, and not on the NIS. He also made what Young called "a bombshell" announcement: his brother wanted to know if the ANC would be prepared to start talks about talks. The ANC pondered the question overnight and then said "yes."

The two sides also talked about the newly formed Democratic Party. The Afrikaners outlined the DP's strategy, namely, to engage with all South Africa's political actors and to use parliament as a forum for transformation. De Klerk noted that the DP hoped to beat the Conservative Party at the next election. Mbeki commented that the ANC would like to meet with representatives of the DP.

Soon after he got back to South Africa, the NIS contacted Esterhuyse to ask him to set up a meeting with the ANC in exile. No-one was to know. They trained Esterhuyse in Mickey Mouse spycraft. On 31 May 1989 he met with Mbeki at the ConsGold offices in London. Mbeki did not know the purpose of the meeting. After some essentially pointless discussion, Esterhuyse wrote a note about reconvening in a pub and went to the toilet. Mbeki read the note. They pretended to conclude their talks – and reconvened in a pub! Over drinks they agreed a process to arrange a meeting between the ANC and the NIS including code names and secret telephone numbers. Talks between the two took place just over three months later, on 12 September 1989.

In the meantime, in June 1989, the newly formed Democratic Party met with the ANC. One of Wynand Malan's supporters was an eccentric multi-millionaire entrepreneur called Douw Steyn. He offered to fly Malan and a DP team to Lusaka (Zambia), Luanda (Angola), and Maputo (Mozambique). Malan asked Jannie Momberg (ex-Independent Party), Tiaan van der Merwe (ex-PFP), and me to join him. We flew in Steyn's corporate jet from an airport without border controls (Lanseria outside Johannesburg). As a result, our passports show no evidence that we left South Africa, but they show us going into Zambia and Angola. We didn't get as far as Mozambique.

Wynand Malan's choice of people for this first DP meeting with the ANC was tactically smart: first, it satisfied the DP leadership that the delegation was representative; second, he needed to create allies in the DP for the politics of the NDM and van der Merwe and Momberg were exactly the right people; and third, it would introduce the ANC to the kinds of people from the PFP and Worrall teams who could become a part of transformation.

We spent two days with Mbeki and others in Lusaka. There was very little explicit political talk. Mostly it was an exercise in people getting to know each other to develop trust. Steve Tshwete of the ANC, a future Minister of Sport who loved rugby, entertained us for two days with fantastic stories about imprisonment on Robben Island. In the evenings we worked our way through copious amounts of Royal Salute provided by Douw Steyn. My most distinctive memory of the trip came from a question that Mbeki asked us late on our last night in Lusaka. We had all had quite a lot to drink. This is what he said (paraphrasing): "We have been approached by the regime for talks. What do you think we should do?"

Hofmeyr's personal archive

The Democratic Party in Lusaka: Pres. Kaunda of Zambia serves the writer a cup of tea. Wynand Malan is smiling in the background. Tiaan van der Merwe is on the right. Kaunda welcomed us to Zambia before our meeting with the ANC. He had hurt his arm.

At the time we did not know that the ANC had been approached by the NIS and we did not ask. Malan was the only person with the kind of insight into the establishment to answer the question. He responded by saying that the ANC had little choice but to respond positively. It needed to position itself clearly as "the other side" in future negotiations. It should take any approach from the regime seriously and respond in good faith.

Against the backdrop of the secret meetings, what, if any, was the relevance of our meeting? The best way to answer that question is by looking at an interview that O'Malley conducted with the ANC in Lusaka about two months after our visit. (O'Malley archive, 24 August). O'Malley asked the ANC about their contacts with various organizations and the topic of the DP came up. Here's what the ANC said:

ANC: *"… it's true that a lot is going on with contact and consultation back and forth between the ANC* (and others) … *including the Democratic Party which* ***for the first time in the history of South Africa is going to represent an anti-apartheid struggle within the parliamentary process****.*

"They had a delegation here recently and we made it very clear that they could do a useful thing by running on a clear anti-apartheid platform for the purposes of educating our fellow whites about what we stand for."

O'Malley challenged the ANC on this reply because many of the old guard in the DP still used a language of power-sharing and minority vetoes. Here's how the ANC replied:

"The DP is a very new party… it's still working out its programme and there are great debates going on inside there. But what can be said is that ***they know what we stand for and they are saying there are possibilities of co-operating with us****… we hope that one day there will be a convergence on this particular issue of the objective of a united, non-racial, democratic South Africa."*

According to the interview, our talks had been relevant to the ANC because of the potential logjam around group rights in any future negotiation and because there were members of the DP who would be vocal in their use of parliament to educate Whites about the ANC. Botha was still president. Both Botha and F.W. de Klerk were known to be committed to group rights. The DP had an electoral following. At least some of its high-profile members were able to participate credibly **in the system** while being allies **in the struggle**. And so, according to the ANC, the DP could be a partner in the process of transformation.

When I first read this interview, I found some of the words that the ANC used quite puzzling. "For the first time in the history of South Africa…" they said. I wondered "but what about people like Helen Suzman and the PFP?" Suzman had fought against apartheid in parliament for more than thirty years, first as a member of the Progressive Party, but eventually as a member of its successor, the PFP. I suppose Archie Gumede's description of the PFP is pertinent: the PFP was a party of liberal White capital; and White capital had not had a stellar record when it came to Black worker rights, poverty, and non-racial democracy.

Mid-1989 was notable for the extent to which people wondered whether F.W. de Klerk would be an improvement on Botha. He had taken over as acting president on 15 August (just nine days before O'Malley's interview). O'Malley therefore asked the ANC what they thought the prospects for change were under de Klerk:

ANC: *"… there is nothing but contradiction in all* (that de Klerk) *has said. We are guessing that they* (the NP under de Klerk) *would like to keep the essentials of apartheid… They would like to preserve* ***white domination****…* (and) ***white privilege****. This is why they keep talking about the protection of group rights."*

O'Malley had interviewed the DP's Colin Eglin and Sampie Terreblanche in the days before the ANC interview. Like the ANC, they did not think that de Klerk would make fundamental changes. This is what Eglin said (O'Malley archive, 20 August):

"... let's say the National Party gets back with a majority (in the 1989 election*) ...whatever changes* (are made)*, are going to be so peripheral, so slow, so begrudging that they're not going to meet the demand of the times. ... **de Klerk is not an initiator**... he's basically a reactive politician."*

And this is what Sampie Terreblanche said (O'Malley archive, 22 August):

*"If one takes it for granted that the National Party will again be the government for five years, during these five years negotiations will start, perhaps **not the real negotiations**, **it will be an erratic start**.*

"The Democratic Party I hope will in these five years already play the role as a mediator, as facilitator, with good relations hopefully with the ANC and the MDM...

*"... we really must work very hard to build the best possible relations with the ANC/MDM and actually **start with a process of negotiation**.* (Then) *if we become the government in 1994 that will not be the point when the real negotiation started. Lots of ground must have already been covered."*

In other words, none of them believed that de Klerk would make substantive changes. And so the role of the Democratic Party, articulated most clearly by Terreblanche, would be to start the process of negotiation and transformation while the country waited five years for the election after the upcoming September election. Yet, by that time F.W. de Klerk had already approved the NIS meeting with the ANC. And as we've seen, he'd asked his brother to table the possibility of "talks about talks."

The first and last Tricameral election took place just three weeks later on 6 September.

iii) The 1989 election

When he was still president, Botha had set 6 September as the date for an election. By that time, de Klerk had already talked about making fundamental changes. De Klerk's talk of radical change continued after he took over from Botha, but no-one in our political circles believed him. As Terreblanche pointed out in his O'Malley interview, the NP had continued to demonize anyone who talked with the ANC. One of the NP's election adverts featured a photograph of Wynand Malan and Sampie Terreblanche sitting next to Joe Slovo at IDASA's Leverkusen conference. Slovo was the leader of the South African Communist Party. The ad had asked "would you trust your children's future to people like these?"

The election itself was not the triumph for which the DP had hoped. It had aimed to win up to 40 seats with 30% of the vote. But de Klerk's campaign message about a "new South Africa" successfully dampened its support. The DP only got 33 seats with 20% of the vote – a significant ten points below what it had hoped for. Former NDM members of parliament, Wynand Malan, Peter Gastrow, and Pierre Cronje, were re-elected. Esther Lategan stood against Kent Durr, an NP cabinet minister in the NP stronghold of Maitland. She lost, but achieved the biggest swing away from the NP in the country.

One of the signs that de Klerk had found the right campaign formula to keep the DP relatively small, was what happened in Stellenbosch. A talented young Afrikaans-speaking candidate

called Hennie Bester failed to improve on Lategan's 1987 performance. The purist Afrikaner Konserwatiewe Party remained the main opposition to the NP by winning 39 seats with 32% of the vote. It was still bigger than the DP by a big margin.

De Klerk won an outright majority of 94 seats. But the election was not a triumph for him: the NP vote fell to 48% – below what it had been in 1953. Because I (like almost everyone else) believed that de Klerk would not introduce substantive change, my conclusion like almost everyone else was that there would eventually have to be an electoral coalition of anti-apartheid Whites involving the DP and reformers in the NP.

In the meantime, conservative liberal DP members had managed to cause problems for the DP in Natal. They fielded candidates in the Indian House of Delegates who were loudly critical of the ANC for its alliance with the South African Communist Party. Although liberal, they were classically deaf to the need to transcend the divide between the apartheid "system" and the extra-parliamentary "struggle." Malan, Gastrow, and Cronje bore the brunt of trying to maintain good relationships with the UDF/MDM/ANC.

As with all the government's previous attempts to create a race-based democracy, the elections for the Houses of Representatives and Delegates were a failure. Only 258,186 of 1,439,112 voters voted in the election to the House of Representatives. That's 18%. Voter turnout for the House of Delegates was 23%.

Turning specifically to the DP, the Interaction committee under Peter Gastrow had not made much progress while the party was in election mode. After the election, the party ratified its tripartite leadership and Gastrow, Lategan, and Cronje tried to get interaction activity started. In spite of the fact that the NDM had embedded its ideas in the DP's strategy and its leaders in the DP's structures, the Interaction committee got little support from the mainstream.

I had attended the DP's post-election celebration in Cape Town. The mood was jubilant. The fact that they were significantly smaller than the Konserwatiewe Party; and that they'd only received 20% of the vote (not the 30% for which they were hoping); and they'd only won 33 seats (not the 40 for which they were hoping) didn't seem to matter. The old guard were just happy to be back in parliament. I can remember feeling "this isn't for me." By that time the ideas I'd been using in my political research had been picked up by a South African marketing research company called Research Surveys. I'd turned my ideas into a product called "The Conversion Model." Along with Butch Rice, a co-founder of Research Surveys, I had started an international business based on it. I began to wind down my political involvement so that I could spend more time on business.

iv) South Africa's National Intelligence Service meets with the ANC

Just six days after the election, the NIS met for the first time with the ANC in Lucerne. Mbeki and Zuma represented the ANC. Two senior operatives called Mike Louw and Maritz

Spaarwater represented the NIS. Louw was Barnard's second in command. Spaarwater was the NIS's main liaison with African countries. Most of my notes about the talks come from O'Malley's interview with Spaarwater (19 January 2003).

Let's set the scene (POM = Padraig O'Malley; MS = Maritz Spaarwater):

POM: *"Niel Barnard said that… for a number of years* (the NIS) *had been encouraging the government to try to open negotiations with the ANC. Could you comment on that?"*

MS: *"I went over to the NIS in 1981 because of what they had started writing… saying we can never solve our problems by way of security force action … that's* (why I) *moved from MI* (military intelligence) *to the NIS…"*

O'Malley asked Spaarwater what the NIS's assessment was of uMkhonto weSizwe's military capability. Spaarwater was scathing: "We regarded the ANC's military capability with disdain." He went on to explain, however, that the NIS had concluded that Whites couldn't hold onto power forever. At some point the government would have to find an acceptable political solution to South Africa's problems. And so, by the mid-1980s, the security establishment had decided that it needed to get more information about the ANC and its aims.

Some strategists in the government thought that it might be possible to split the ANC by, for instance, amplifying the tension between ANC negotiators and its military wing. The NIS knew, however, that the ANC "were far too intelligent (for anyone) to pull the wool over their eyes." By the second half of the 1980s, mass mobilization and international isolation were putting unbearable pressure on South Africa's economy, and so, according to Spaarwater, the NIS had decided to ask for talks.

MS: *"… by the good offices of the academic professor Willie Esterhuyse who put us in contact with Mbeki… we saw him and Jacob Zuma the first time. We were there to explore the possibilities of starting to talk… we had a good few snorts* (meaning alcoholic drinks) *until very early in the morning though Zuma never drank anything alcoholic…*

"… it was very pleasant… the upshot was that both of us went back to our principals… and said that we thought we should carry on… (de Klerk) *became President a few days before we came back from the first meeting. In fact, we were the second appointment he had on the first day that he had appointments as President…"*

When O'Malley asked Spaarwater what de Klerk's strategy was, his answer was that he'd been perplexed. "You know, Padraig, that's something that worried me then and it's worried me ever since. **There was no strategy as far as I could see**…" he said.

Niel Barnard had also been highly critical of de Klerk in his interviews with O'Malley (1998). He described de Klerk as a tactician who approached politics like a juggler trying to keep "15 balls in the air." De Klerk honestly believed that he was smart enough to negotiate the political landscape safely without specific constitutional goals in mind. When O'Malley asked Barnard what he would have recommended, he replied that he would have pushed much harder for **a**

deeper level of federalism. The reason is obvious: a highly devolved federalism would have entrenched South Africa's existing racial boundaries in the new constitution.

Spaarwater described the NP as divided between those who would have tried to extract protections for Whites; and those who had accepted that South Africa would have a Black majority government. According to Spaarwater, de Klerk took the side of the latter. But de Klerk's lack of a strategy put the ANC at a significant advantage because the ANC knew exactly what it wanted: Black majority rule. And so Spaarwater's frank summary of the Afrikaners' negotiating position was, to quote, "**… you had to decide how much you wanted to lose**."

One of the important topics covered in the Spaarwater interview was the extent to which de Klerk might have known about rogue security force activity. Spaarwater replied that he didn't think that de Klerk had had any hidden agendas. De Klerk had started to dismantle the influence of the security establishment as soon as he'd taken over. Unfortunately, this did not stop the rogue elements from initiating and funding internecine violence.

Esterhuyse also summarized the ANC-NIS meeting briefly in his book. He described it as a success for at least two reasons (2012, pp. 224-5): first, it became clear to both sides that they wanted negotiations and not violence; and second, they "discovered each other as South Africans," that is, they concluded that they could be negotiating partners – not that they shared a common ideology, but that they could trust each other and work together for democratic transformation.

Events moved quickly after the 1989 election. So let us pause to summarize history's flow.

1989 18 January: P.W. Botha had a mild stroke. On 2 February, F.W. de Klerk was elected to lead the National Party ahead of the security establishment's first choice, Barend du Plessis.

8 April: we launched the Democratic Party with a program based on the politics of the NDM – participate in apartheid structures and work with "struggle" partners to transform South Africa.

21-24 April: Mbeki and Esterhuyse met for the fifth time. Willem de Klerk said that his brother was opposed to government by the security establishment; and that he would probably continue a process of gradual transformation.

31 May: after being asked to do so by the NIS, Esterhuyse met with Mbeki to establish a protocol for an eventual meeting between the ANC and the NIS.

22-24 June: a DP delegation led by Wynand Malan flew to Lusaka and then Luanda for talks with the ANC. Mbeki asked Malan how the ANC should respond to an approach by "the regime." Malan replied: take it seriously, approach it in good faith.

At this stage I would say that the Democratic Party was still relevant. No-one knew, probably not even F.W. de Klerk himself, how quickly things would change after the September election.

29 June-2 July: the Five Freedoms Forum met with the ANC in Lusaka. 115 South Africans (including me) flew to Lusaka for three days of meetings.

I am not going to devote much space to the Five Freedoms Forum meeting. It happened in the week after our DP meeting. And so, I found myself back in Lusaka. By this time, it seemed to me that the ANC was using these meetings largely as exercises in networking, potential recruitment, and information gathering to develop strategies. To be fair, no-one anticipated how soon de Klerk would make radical changes. I was asked to write a position paper for the meeting on "The White South African Psyche." In the paper I predicted that the White response to non-racial democracy would depend on simple, concrete realities like (to quote) "the preservation of standards of housing, schooling, and national management." I had no idea how prophetic those words would be.

1989 5 July: in a meeting organized by the NIS and without the prior knowledge of his cabinet, Botha finally met with Mandela for the first time at Tuynhuys, the president's Cape Town home.

15 August: the NP ousted Botha as president. De Klerk took over as acting president. At his first cabinet meeting on 16 August, he approved the NIS meeting with the ANC.

20-24 August: O'Malley interviewed Colin Eglin (DP), Sampie Terreblanche (DP) and the ANC. None of them held out much hope for significant change under de Klerk.

6 September: first (and, as it happens, last) Tricameral election. The National Party won, but with less than 50% of the vote. The DP won 33 seats – not the 40 for which they'd hoped.

12 September: first in-person contact between "system" and "struggle" power players in Lucerne, Switzerland. NIS = Maritz Spaarwater, Mike Louw. ANC = Thabo Mbeki, Jacob Zuma.

13 September: with the state of emergency still in place, de Klerk gave permission for a protest march in Cape Town led by Archbishop Tutu and Cape Town's mayor, Gordon Oliver. 30,000 people turned up. It was the biggest protest march in Cape Town since 1961.

30 September-1 October: sixth Mbeki/Esterhuyse talks. The ANC delegation included Zuma for the first time. The talks became public knowledge through a front-page article in the *Sunday Times*. It called the Afrikaner delegation "Broederbonders."

Willem de Klerk participated in the September talks against his brother's wishes. He was again asked for a political analysis now that the election was over. He said that while his brother was committed to a politics of negotiation, his brother was also committed to group rights. Based on his knowledge of the parties and their leaders, Willem de Klerk thought **it would be ten years before South Africa's first democratic election**. It would take three years for "talks about talks" to set the stage for actual talks. It might then take another three years for actual talks to deliver a constitution. The transition to democracy would then probably take four years. It is clear, therefore, that not even F.W. de Klerk's brother knew how quickly F.W. de Klerk was about to change everything. F.W. de Klerk condemned the sixth set of talks, saying that "the ANC exploited talks of this kind in order to conceal their true nature as a revolutionary movement" (Esterhuyse, 2012, p. 242).

To continue the timeline:

15 October: de Klerk released six high-profile political prisoners including Walter Sisulu (former ANC Secretary-General), Oscar Mpetha (a key UDF leader), and Jafta Masemola (PAC leader).

16 November: de Klerk announced that the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act would be repealed. It had enforced racial segregation for facilities like hospitals, hotels, public transport, town halls, restaurants – even park benches.

13 December: de Klerk and Mandela met for the first time in secret at Tuynhuys to discuss South Africa's political future.

By this time IDASA had long been irrelevant and the DP was rapidly becoming so. You may remember that Wynand Malan and F.W. de Klerk had shared a belief in the importance of "clean-slate" negotiations with all political organizations as far back as January 1987. Why then had de Klerk attacked people who crossed political lines to talk with the ANC? Well… simple! It's politics 101: if you intend to be central to a process, you don't do anything to improve the standing of your competitors. De Klerk was positioning himself to be central to the process of transformation. There was no way that he was going to boost the efforts of others.

Still, anti-apartheid forces had no idea of how far de Klerk was about to go. In the first week of November, Willie Esterhuyse and Thabo Mbeki were speakers at a conference in New York organized by the Africa-America Institute. Esterhuyse was the first speaker and argued that a climate for negotiation had not yet been created in South Africa. "South Africa was at best at the start of **a pre-negotiation period,**" he said (2012, p. 245). Mbeki echoed Esterhuyse. According to Esterhuyse, Mbeki also believed that negotiations were some time away. Mbeki went into detail about what it would take for negotiations to begin. Obstacles included the South African government's requirement that sanctions and the armed struggle be suspended; and de Klerk's known commitment to group rights. And yet, by December, de Klerk was working with the NIS on how to get real negotiations started.

v) F.W. de Klerk's speech: 2 February 1990

On 2 February he opened parliament with the speech that changed everything:

I wish to focus the spotlight on the process of negotiation and related issues.

Practically every leader agrees that negotiation is the key to reconciliation, peace and a new and just dispensation. However, numerous excuses for refusing to take part are advanced. Some are valid. Others are merely part of a political chess game. And while the game proceeds, valuable time is being lost.

I committed the Government during my inauguration to giving active attention to the most important obstacles in the way of negotiation. Today I am able to announce far-reaching decisions in this connection.

I wish to urge every political and community leader, in and outside Parliament, to approach the new opportunities which are being created, constructively. There is no time left for advancing all manner of new conditions that will delay the negotiating process.

The steps that have been decided, are the following:

- The prohibition of the African National Congress, the Pan Africanist Congress, the South African Communist Party and a number of subsidiary organizations is being rescinded.

- People serving prison sentences merely because they were members of one of these organizations will be identified and released.
- The media emergency regulations as well as the education emergency regulations are being abolished in their entirety.
- The restrictions in terms of the emergency regulations on 33 organizations are being rescinded (this included the UDF and COSATU).
- The conditions imposed in terms of the security emergency regulations on 374 people on their release, are being rescinded and the regulations (enabling them) are being abolished.
- The period of detention in terms of the security emergency regulations will be limited henceforth to six months. Detainees acquire the right to legal representation and a medical practitioner of their own choosing.

These decisions by the Cabinet are in accordance with the Government's declared intention to normalise the political process in South Africa without jeopardising the maintenance of good order.

Implementation will be immediate and, where necessary, notices will appear in the Government Gazette from tomorrow.

Four days later, Louw and Spaarwater were back in Switzerland for talks with the ANC.

Like almost everyone, de Klerk's speech took me by surprise. My thought-bubble as I listened was "there's nothing left for the DP to do." I concluded that I could wind down my political involvement and concentrate on building the Conversion Model business. I only became directly involved in South African politics again in 1993 when Mark Orkin (an academic from Wits University), Stan Greenberg (a consultant to Bill Clinton) and I were awarded the contract to do the ANC's election research. I continued to do their election research until I resigned the account in 2009.

De Klerk's speech signalled that fundamental transformation was about to begin and that the country's two main power players – the ANC and the NP – would be at its centre. My NDM colleagues responded in different ways. As Wynand Malan pointed out in an interview with O'Malley five months after the speech (O'Malley archive, 10 July 1990), de Klerk now fully occupied the position that the DP had occupied: apartheid was on its way out and the stage was being set for "clean-slate" negotiations. Malan's point was that the politics of the NDM was no longer needed. The next day he released a press statement to say that he was resigning from all party-political positions and that 31 July would be his last day in parliament. He would later become one of the 17 commissioners in South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Peter Gastrow and Pierre Cronje continued in parliament. In 1992, Cronje and four other DP MPs defected to the ANC. They became the first ANC members ever to sit in an elected parliament in South Africa. By that time, Cronje was almost completely immersed in trying to stop the war between the ANC and Inkatha which was at its worst between 1990 and 1994.

Peter Gastrow remained a member of the DP, playing a leading role in the Peace Accord which helped to save negotiations when they nearly ran aground in 1991. As the chair of the transitional government's Law and Order Sub-council, he oversaw the security forces in the run-up to the 1994 election.

Esther Lategan swopped party-political relevance for social relevance. In 1991 she was appointed as the Executive Director of South Africa's leading non-profit: the National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO), a position she stayed in until 2000. Under her tenure, NICRO became a leader in restorative justice and crime prevention through programs like its "Youth at Risk" initiative.

Gastrow tells an amusing anecdote about the day of de Klerk's speech. It's customary in South Africa for political parties to meet before the opening of parliament to plan their parliamentary strategies. In the break before de Klerk's speech, Gastrow went to the toilet. He happened to be alone. All of a sudden, the door slammed open in the manner of a drunkard crashing into the toilet. It was two members of the National Party caucus. They had just come from the NP meeting – and like a drunkard who no longer has any control over his movements, his thoughts, or his words, one of them shouted to the other "NOU IS ONS GEFOK!" (in English: "now we are fucked"). De Klerk had obviously just told his caucus what he was about to tell the country. The rest is a well-documented history. Four years later, South Africa held its first non-racial democratic election.

In retrospect, **the politics of the NDM turned out to be the backstop that South Africa would have needed** if P.W. Botha hadn't had a stroke; and if F.W. de Klerk hadn't beaten Barend du Plessis to the leadership of the National Party.

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Epilogue

What Happened after 1994 – some Personal Observations

Outside of the Boer War, the period between de Klerk's speech in 1990 and the first democratic election in 1994 was the most violent in South Africa's history. According to the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission**, about 14,000 people died as a result of political violence in those few years. By contrast, the TRC records about 7,000 political deaths in the 42 years between 1948 and 1990.

My epilogue is not about those years. The question I want to consider is what happened after 1994? For anyone who was in South Africa at that time, the transition from violence to relative peace just before the election was dramatic. It was as if someone had switched off a switch called "political violence." Millions of people stood patiently in line on 27 April 1994, waiting for their turn to vote. Butch Rice and I were building a successful international business by then. There was no better time to be a South African travelling in the world. We were a miracle country. But South Africa failed to live up to its promise. What went wrong?

Thousands of learned pages have already been written about South Africa post-1994. I do not propose to add yet another complex analysis. I want, instead, to focus on just one aspect of the question that I think has been overlooked. After the 1994 election, the problem was already apparent to me. And so, if you asked me why things went wrong, my short answer would be: human nature. Let's see what I mean.

i) South Africa's first democratic election

Nineteen parties contested South Africa's first democratic election in 1994. Under the interim constitution's proportional representation system, seven were awarded seats in the 400-seat national assembly. An ANC alliance with the Congress of South African Trade Unions and the South African Communist Party got 62.6% of the vote and 252 seats. De Klerk's National Party got 20.4% and 82 seats. The Democratic Party, as Malan had predicted in his O'Malley interview, did not do well – it got just 1.7% of the vote and seven seats.

South Africa created an **Independent Electoral Commission** to run the election. Journalist and academic, Steven Friedman, was its first head of information analysis. In a review article written on the 20th anniversary of the 1994 election (*Sunday Independent,* 27 April 2014), Friedman argued that the 1994 election had been "a technical disaster but a political triumph"! There had been widespread allegations of cheating. The IEC had had no way of checking the allegations because it hadn't had time to create a voters' roll. Friedman implied that the allegations may have been true. His article was headed "The bargain that saved us in 1994" as if "free and fair" had been a pretence.

But there was almost no evidence of cheating in the polling numbers – with one exception, the results were completely in line with what our ANC polling had predicted – including when our predictions ran counter to ANC expectations like the Western Cape where the ANC had expected to win. I was at the ANC's celebration in Cape Town after the polls had closed. A future finance minister, Trevor Manuel, shouted at me in an exuberant voice above the noise "Hofmeyr, tomorrow we will prove that you are wrong about the Western Cape!" I smiled and shouted back "I don't think so!" When the votes were in, we learned that the ANC had only won 14 of the Western Cape's 42 seats. As our research had predicted, de Klerk's National Party had comfortably beaten the ANC. Widespread cheating would have led to anomalous results. There was only one anomaly and that was in KwaZulu-Natal. Our polling had predicted a majority for the ANC, but the election produced a win for the Inkatha Freedom Party.

If anything, for a country that had never organized a nationwide non-racial election on this scale, the election was both a triumph for the people and the electoral organization. The vote was peaceful – and **the count suggested that people had voted for exactly who they supported**. If anything, Friedman got it backwards: the election was a technical triumph but a political disaster – because – as our polls had predicted would happen, **a great many people voted almost entirely along ethnic lines**. White, Coloured, and Indian voters rallied behind de Klerk's National Party. Black voters rallied behind the ANC – except in KwaZulu-Natal where the Zulu vote was split.

My summary: the vote betrayed ethnic fears which **four years of negotiation had done nothing to allay**. One of the seminal moments in the run-up to the election had been an ANC meeting to finalize its campaign message. At the time, the ANC was quite worried about mobilizing a big turnout for elections. It had had decades of mobilizing people for mass marches and rallies – but none for the more solitary act of getting people to put a cross on a piece of paper and go home. As was its way, it convened a meeting of all stakeholders to argue the question and make a decision. There must have been more than 100 people present. The consultant, Stan Greenberg, opened the meeting with a presentation based on our election research. Then came the debate.

One big constituency argued for what one might call "a liberation campaign." What could be more mobilizing, they argued, than a campaign that said "we're the winners, we're free!" The slogan would be something like "It's our turn now."

But supported by our research, an equally big constituency argued for a campaign that would be more about nation building and unity. They argued that the campaign should celebrate the fact that South Africans now had a chance to work together to rebuild the country. From this argument came what, for years, would be the ANC's strapline: **a better life for all** – a better life for the majority because they'd be free from discrimination and have a government that was committed to getting rid of inequality and poverty. And a better life for White South Africans because they'd be equal partners in this project; and they'd no longer have to worry

about their future in the country. Like all good slogans, it wasn't just a slogan. It was clear to me as an observer, that it genuinely reflected the mood of the majority of the activists in the room – they really were hoping that democracy would give all South Africans a chance to work together to build a just and prosperous new South Africa.

Much to my dismay, the election showed that only Black South Africans had responded to the ANC's non-racial invitation to build "a better life for all." You might say – "but wasn't that to be expected?" With hindsight I would probably have to answer "yes," but that's my point. The way South Africans voted in 1994 is Exhibit 1 in my argument about what happened after 1994: human nature trumped South Africans' idealistic intentions. Whites, Coloureds, and Indians looked for safety by staying in their group and voting as a group.

ii) Inequality and poverty in South Africa

The interim constitution required the ANC to form a government of national unity. As a result, the National Party governed in coalition with the ANC. Nelson Mandela became the country's first democratically elected president with F.W. de Klerk as his deputy president.

The scale of the challenge to the new government should not be underestimated. As far as I was concerned, the most important problems were poverty and inequality. Nearly 350 years of discrimination in government spending had created a massive backlog for the government to make up. I'll illustrate my point by focusing on education. My numbers come from a World Bank report authored by Castro-Leal (1999, p. 13).

In 1993, the year before the election, total government spending on education (in South African Rand) was R16.9 billion. R4,300 went to the education of each White scholar. Coloured and Indian scholars each got about R2,600 and R3,400. Black scholars in urban areas got just R1,400 each. In non-independent Black territories, they got R913 each.

Now consider the populations: there were 8.3 million Blacks in school or at university. There were only 1.1 million Whites. When you put the disparity in spending together with the difference in numbers, you will see that Mandela's new government would have had to increase the education budget from R16.9 billion to R45.5 billion to get rid of inequality in education. That's comfortably more than double – and it's before taking into account the fact that many Black children weren't even in school because their parents couldn't afford it. Education was already taking up a high 24% of all government spending. An increase to R45.5 billion would have soaked up more than 60% of the national budget.

Now consider the other spending needs (Hirschowitz and Orkin 1997): clean water – only 27% of Black households had taps in their homes; electrification – only 31% of Black households had electricity. Black areas needed medical services, telephones, and tarred roads. It was a long list.

The government responded with a **Reconstruction and Development Programme** and with policy changes that made an effort to reduce inequality in a fair way. For instance, when it came to municipal services like the provision of water, electricity, or tarred roads, the government created non-racial districts that enabled rates and taxes that had previously been racially segregated to be pooled and distributed to the areas of greatest need. As a result, wealthier areas (usually White or urban Coloured and Indian) saw spending decrease as money was shifted to improve the services where their poorer Black neighbours lived.

In education specifically, the government introduced a standard classroom size for which it would pay for teachers. At the time, government schools in wealthier areas got enough government money to support a teacher-pupil ratio of about 1:20. Schools in Black suburbs only got enough to support a ratio of 1:50. The government standardized funding by paying the salary of one teacher for every 30 to 35 pupils. I can remember the outrage of the White parents where we lived!

Remember the paper that I had written for the Five Freedoms Forum meeting with the ANC in 1989. I had argued that White South Africans would react very negatively if any future government was seen to be challenging their lifestyles. You may also remember that surveys in the 1980s showed that Whites would accept racial integration as long as what they called "standards" were maintained. As we've seen with the municipal and education examples above, the ANC's policy aims were simple: to equalize spending. Yet a majority of White, Coloured, and Indian voters felt that their living standards were under siege. They were ignorant of the extent to which their lifestyles had been subsidized by the apartheid government. And they had no understanding of the scale of the challenge that the ANC government was facing.

In this context, the Democratic Party led by Tony Leon mounted a politically astute but socially irresponsible campaign for the 1999 election. Their slogan was "Fight Back," that is, fight back against the ANC government's attempts to create equity. Fight to keep your privileges! It worked. By the 1999 election, South Africa's ethnic minorities had started to give up on the National Party. They flocked, instead, to the DP under its "Fight Back" banner. Far from being a party with a social democratic orientation as the National Democratic Movement would have hoped, the DP had become the party of privileged ethnic minorities.

The ANC increased its share of the vote to 66.4% as a result of the fact that it had successfully improved the lives of millions of poor, mostly Black and rural Coloured South Africans through the provision of water and electricity and better schools and medical services. But the DP's "Fight Back" campaign helped it to become the official opposition with 9.6% of the vote. De Klerk's coalition with the ANC was a disaster for the National Party. Many of its supporters felt that the NP had failed to protect their living standards. By 1999 de Klerk had given up and resigned. A rebranded New National Party got only 6.9% of the vote.

And so, human nature triumphed again: people voted to preserve their lifestyles against a government that had merely attempted to achieve equity and stopped subsidizing them. I hear you say "but it's understandable!" I agree – it is. But that's my point. Ethnic minorities were incapable of looking beyond their narrow material interests. The ANC continued to invite all South Africans to participate in the challenge of building "a better life for all" – to no avail. Privileged minorities largely rejected the invitation.

iii) Crime and corruption

In December 1988, during the fourth Mbeki/Esterhuyse meeting, Thabo Mbeki had expressed concern about the potential for corruption in the new South Africa. He talked about two nations in one country – a rich one (mainly White) and a poor one (mainly Black). He told Esterhuyse that he really worried about the contrast: "If we don't address (the inequality) in an acceptable way in future, black people, once they have political power, will find any way whatsoever to gain access to wealth." He went on (Esterhuyse, 2012, p. 165):

> *"Liberation from a dictatorship inevitably also entails corruption. People who have been disadvantaged economically believe they are entitled to 'make up for it'. South Africa must avoid this at all costs..."*

This is a complex topic and I am not an expert. Many people have written about it. So I will limit myself to just a few observations. First, by the mid- and late 1990s it was clear that the ANC had inherited a police force that was ill-equipped to fight conventional organized crime. The police had built a very good political intelligence network, but not a criminal intelligence network. South Africa was a poor country with high unemployment and it was now open to the world. It was easy to recruit and set up criminal networks. Our police were not prepared for what hit the country.

Butch and I continued to travel the world building a business based on my Conversion Model ideas. By the late 1990s our international friends were asking questions about violent crime – was South Africa a safe place to visit? We always answered "yes." We didn't feel unsafe and visitors had little to fear. But corruption tends to follow organized crime. South Africa didn't escape the corruption of law enforcement by organized and, eventually, international criminal networks.

As for corruption in government – it was the inevitable consequence of the ANC's attempts to address inequality as fast as possible. The country needed an active program of Black economic empowerment. Board positions, share options, a new Black elite. Mechanisms to win tenders by putting the right people in place evolved quickly into a system of pay-offs. Businesses won contracts whether they were competent or not – no matter the price. Kick-backs to decision makers became common. Human nature again – South Africans turned out to be normal – and normally corruptible. I know this is a simplistic analysis, but I will leave it there.

iv) In conclusion

I sometimes wonder if de Klerk didn't make his speech too soon. We needed a longer revolutionary period. South Africans hadn't had enough time to get to know each other or to understand the full scale of what it would take to build a just and prosperous society. We needed a kind of Marshall Plan. But de Klerk's speech led to conventional democratic competition in what was a massively unequal and ethnically divided country. The result (naturally) was that ethnic minorities voted according to what they thought would preserve their interests. To begin with, their votes went to de Klerk. Then they went to the Democratic Party and its successor, the Democratic Alliance.

The DP/DA built a reputation for good governance in Cape Town and the Western Cape. But although its share of the Black vote increased slightly, mostly it consolidated the White, Coloured, and Indian vote. In the meantime, poor governance and corruption led eventually to the erosion of ANC support. But Black South Africans didn't turn to the DA. They turned, instead, to populist Black parties founded by well-known national politicians with a socialist message of wealth redistribution. Table 5 is a record of the popular vote from 1994 to 2024.

Table 5: South African general election results: 1994-2024

Table designed and compiled by the author. Source: South Africa's Independent Electoral Commission.

	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014	2019	2024
ANC alliance	62.6	66.4	69.7	65.9	62.2	57.5	40.2
Democratic Party/Alliance	1.7	9.6	12.4	16.7	22.2	20.8	21.8
National/New National Party	20.4	6.9	1.6	*... merged into the ANC in 2005 ...*			
Inkatha Freedom Party	10.5	8.6	7.0	4.6	4.0	3.4	3.8
Freedom Front +	2.2	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.9	2.4	1.4
Pan Africanist Congress	1.2	0.8	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2
Economic Freedom Fighters	*Founded by Julius Malema in 2013*				6.4	10.8	9.5
uMkhonto we Sizwe	*Founded by Jacob Zuma in 2023*						14.6
Briefly Relevant		5.0	5.6	9.9	2.3	1.2	4.4
Others	1.4	1.9	2.1	1.8	1.8	3.7	4.1

Read: the ANC got 62.6% of the vote in 1994. The Democratic Party (later renamed the Democratic Alliance), got 1.7%. And so on...

Note: The Democratic Party became the Democratic Alliance in 2000. The National Party became the New National Party in 1997 and merged with the ANC in 2005.

"Briefly Relevant" refers to parties that were established by well-known politicians who had a high profile for a while, but didn't last. "Others" is many small parties that appeared and disappeared.

There are many interesting patterns in this table. For instance, although I haven't broken them out, the **Briefly Relevant** group of parties includes two ethnic Coloured parties: the Independent Democrats in 2004 and 2009, and the Patriotic Alliance in 2024. The big increase

in support for **Briefly Relevant** parties in 2009 was due to a breakaway from the ANC called **Congress of the People** founded by ANC dissidents Mosiuoa Lekota and Mbhazima Shilowa. But the main trends over time are clear: the ANC gradually increased its share of the vote in the first ten years as it was seen to deliver an improved quality of life for poor people. It picked up Black votes in KwaZulu-Natal and rural Coloureds in the Western Cape. Support for Buthelezi's Inkatha fell; and in the Western Cape, defecting rural Coloureds chose the ANC over the Democratic Party/Alliance.

In the meantime, support for de Klerk's National Party collapsed and the DP/DA benefited. To begin with, it didn't pick up all of the NP's lost support. You can see this from the fact that the combined support of the two was 22.1% in 1994 and only 14% in 2004. But by 2014 the DA vote was mainly made up of what had been the NP vote.

The most important trend is what has happened to Black support as the ANC failed to deliver: it has gone, not to the DA, but to populist Black leaders with outsize personalities who broke away from the ANC to establish the Economic Freedom Fighters in 2013 and uMkhonto we Sizwe in 2023. The speed with which ANC support has collapsed is striking. But what's just as striking is the failure of the DA to pick up any of that support so far. In 2024 the combined support for populist Black politicians exceeded that for the DA for the first time. This may not continue. The populists have not shown the political discipline that's needed to become a long-lived democratic party. In time the DA may find its non-racial footing; or the Communist Party might grow; or the ANC might even recover.

Where does South Africa go from here? We have proven that we are not a miracle country. We're normal. We continue to be really good at democracy. Although we did not rise above ourselves to address the problem of inequality, I am a long-term optimist about both South Africa and Africa. I just think it's going to take longer than many of us had hoped in 1994…

… which is where I'd like to end – with the words of one of South Africa's great but forgotten politicians – not Mandela, and not any one of our presidents or four Nobel Peace Prize winners, but Robert Sobukwe, an African and a complete human being:

"The Africanists take the view that **there is only one race to which we all belong and that is the human race**. We aim, politically, at government by the Africans for Africans, with everybody… who is prepared to accept **the democratic rule of an African majority being regarded as an African**."

People across the world, including in South Africa, have a long way to go to rise to Sobukwe's challenge to become human, not just tribal and racist. My hope in 1994 was that South Africans would get there first. Although we are already in the 2020s and we haven't quite succeeded, it is still my hope that South Africans will get there first.

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Appendix 1: A Map and Some Tables

Map drawn by the author (Jan Hofmeyr)

A map shows where a small selection of key towns and areas are

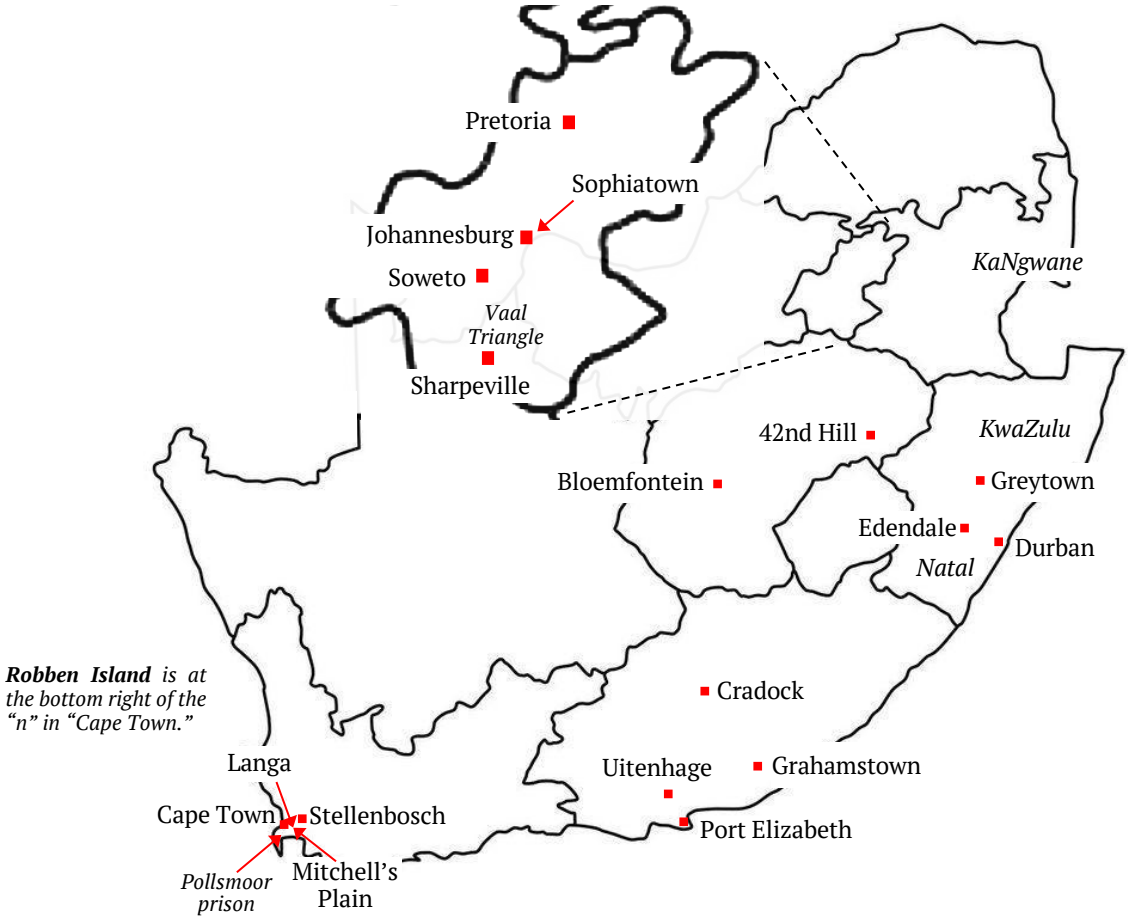

Table 1: White South Africans' political preferences – 1977 to 1988

Table designed and compiled by the author from survey data provided by Market and Opinion Surveys

	August 1977 to January 1988						Oct. 1987	
	Aug 77	**Sep 81**	**Dec 85**	**Jun 86**	**Oct 87**	**Jan 88**	**Afr**	**Eng**
National Party	75	57	56	60	49	53	55	36
Herstigte/Konserwatiewe	**1**	11	17	**18**	**26**	**23**	**36**	**9**
Progressive Federal Party	14	**24**	**23**	**18**	**11**	**11**	**4**	**24**
New Republic Party	9	8	4	3	1	1	0	3
Independent Movement					**13**	**9**	**5**	**28**
Nat. Dem. Movement						**3**	-	-
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Read: in August 1977, (excluding "don't knows") 75% of White South Africans said they would vote for the National Party. 14% said they'd vote for the Progressive Federal Party. By June 1986, support for the NP had fallen to 60%.

Note: The October 1987 results were in the field in September before the formation of the NDM. Worrall hadn't yet changed the name of his party to the Independent Party. I have taken out the "don't know/will not vote."

Table 2: Electoral support in six constituencies in Natal

Table designed and compiled by the author from survey results for the KwaNatal Indaba

	December 1987					
	P North	**Umbilo**	**U'langa**	**D Central**	**D North**	**Pinetown**
National Party	33	59	34	32	37	45
Progressive Fed'l Party	18	12	21	31	27	19
Independent Party	13	11	18	16	14	18
Nat. Dem. Movement	2	3	4	3	3	4
New Republic Party	5	3	5	0	3	2
Konserwatiewe Party	6	6	3	6	3	4
Undecided/Will not vote	23	6	14	12	14	10
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Key: P = Pietermaritzburg; D = Durban; U'langa = Umhlanga.

Read: in Umbilo, the NP would have received about 59% of the vote "if an election were held tomorrow." The PFP would have received 12%. The IP (Worrall) would have received 11% – and so on.

Table 3: How each type scored in terms of important social values

Table designed and compiled by the author from survey data provided by Sociomonitor

Values	**Black Mc F**	**Black Yup**	**White Yup**	**Black SC**	**Black B ID**	**White B ID**	**Black TV**	**White Mc F**	**White Crt**
Racial Harmony	51	33	44	11	14	0	20	20	39
National Identity	49	31	34	7	13	30	27	33	2
Aggression	10	9	24	52	38	33	10	23	19
Reject authority	8	6	28	76	18	18	10	12	45
Oriented to past	-	-	-	-	-	-	35	44	-
Plan ahead	30	38	-	13	19	-	38	-	-
Blurring of sexes	-	-	41	-	-	9	-	14	39
Approximate size	20%	17%	24%	22%	19%	27%	22%	26%	24%

Read: Black South Africans in the "Mc F" group scored 51 when it came to racial harmony. That is high. They scored 49 when it came to national identity - also high. They scored 10 in terms of aggression. That is very low. They made up about 20% of the black population.

I've highlighted scores that were politically positive in blue. Politically problematic low scores are in grey. Problematic high scores are in red. Where the scores aren't relevant to understanding a group, I've left them out.

Key: Mc F: Responsible; Yup: Yuppies; SC: Self-centred; B ID: Brand Identity; TV: Tribal Values; Crt: Creatives

Appendix 2: Short personal histories in alphabetical order

These are not lengthy CVs. They are slightly more complete personal histories of what people did after de Klerk's speech. The stories are in alphabetical order.

Glossary: "Impi" is a Zulu word that means war. It's used to refer to combat units or armies.

Pierre Cronje

Pierre Cronje's Greytown constituency stretched from Kloof near Durban, past Greytown to the Tugela River. It was flanked by the tribal areas of KwaZulu in the east and north. By the early 1980s, he had become deeply involved in conflict resolution – dealing, for instance, with border disputes between farming and tribal areas, violence monitoring, forced removals, and attempts to mediate the conflict between the UDF/ANC and Inkatha/SA security forces. That work continued into the 1990s as the conflict intensified after de Klerk's speech. He built an extensive network of people (including members of the police) to provide advance warning of potential conflict.

One of the worst episodes after de Klerk's speech occurred in the Vulindlela-Edendale district south of Pietermaritzburg. Upper Vulindlela was an Inkatha stronghold. Edendale was a UDF/ANC stronghold. But commuters travelling between Pietermaritzburg and Upper Vulindlela had to pass through Edendale. The **Truth and Reconciliation Commission** picks up the story of what's now referred to as the "Seven Day War" (TRC Report, Vol. 3:3, para. 265-267):

> During February and March 1990, buses carrying commuters from the Vulindlela area were stoned by young UDF and ANC supporters as they drove through Edendale, damaging buses and injuring passengers. Some deaths were also reported.

On 25 March 1990, Inkatha held a mass rally at a sports stadium in Durban. The TRC reports:

> That afternoon, buses carrying Inkatha rally-goers travelled through Edendale and were again stoned, injuring passengers and damaging the buses. Roadside skirmishes were reported between the Inkatha supporters and Edendale residents.
>
> The next day, Monday 26 March, Inkatha supporters from Vulindlela could not get to work in town because no buses were running on that route. Mr T Mbanjwa from Caluza told the Commission at the Seven Day War hearing that he saw a group of well-armed men descending from the hill: "*... it was apparent that we had to run for our lives because we heard some gunshots, and some people were attacked with pangas and assegais...*"

By 28 March 1990, the conflict had evolved into a well-organized attack by Inkatha. Cronje was on the scene. A group of 2,000 to 3,000 armed men had gathered on a ridge above a settlement called Caluza before splitting into two and attacking three settlements called Gezubuso, KwaShane, and KwaMnyana. The police were on the scene but made no attempt to disarm them. According to Cronje (Washington Post, 7 April 1990):

"There is absolutely no doubt that this was a calculated Inkatha attack that required considerable logistical preparation. There is no way a force of that size could have assembled there in spontaneous response to the stoning of buses."

The attacks continued over subsequent days. A force of up to 12,000 Inkatha fighters continuously attacked the Edendale communities. More than 100 people were killed, 3,000 homes destroyed, and about 30,000 people were rendered homeless. Cronje told the TRC that he had repeatedly tried to get South African law enforcement to intervene, only to be told that they didn't have the authority or the manpower. The TRC concluded that the police had been complicit in the violence, mainly by their inaction.

Later, in April, Cronje and his wife Ina witnessed a large Inkatha Impi openly being handed rifles by the KwaZulu police in a town between Durban and Pietermaritzburg called Mpumalanga. The Impi set fire to some fifty houses and drove more than a thousand people from their homes. After it was over, they saw the Impi handing the rifles back to the police. Cronje helped to facilitate a peace initiative involving a prominent, non-aligned member of the community. They established a Concerned Citizens Forum of people from all political persuasions. It has since become an established Peace and Development Association that – to this day – runs a Heritage Centre highlighting the history of the violence and subsequent 30 years of peace.

On 21 June 1991, a large Impi attacked ANC homes in a town called Ndaleni outside Richmond. They were supported by a unit of the South African riot police. Although not many people were killed, over the next two days about 20,000 people were displaced. According to evidence at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the attack was in response to a prior attack by ANC supporters in late March. Cronje helped to facilitate a peace initiative between community leaders and one of the known Inkatha warlords from the bordering tribal area. People returned home and schools re-opened after six months.

Cronje won election to South Africa's first democratically elected parliament in 1994 as a member of the ANC. He stayed in parliament until 1999 when he was asked by Mac Maharaj, then Minister of Transport, to join the newly established state-owned South African National Roads Agency (SANRAL). His specific task was to transform the industry by developing policies that benefited smaller contractors and protected them from exploitation by large established contractors.

Pierre Cronje started a one-person engineering consultancy when he stopped working for SANRAL at the mandatory retirement age of 61. Working with an engineering firm called Naidu Consulting, he established an "Academy of Excellence" to provide an opportunity for eight students who had completed their academic studies to do their one-year practical work and obtain their full qualification. He also acted as mentor for technicians to obtain their professional status and received the CESA Aon Engineering Excellence Award for 2020.

Pierre Cronje's wife Ina, a lawyer by profession, defended many UDF/ANC people who got involved in the violence in KwaZulu-Natal from the mid-eighties. She joined the ANC when it was unbanned and served on the Provincial Executive from its inception. In 1994 she was elected to the KwaZulu-Natal Legislative assembly, serving as the ANC's chief whip for ten years and then as MEC for education for five years and MEC for finance for five years. She retired in 2014.

Cronje tells an amusing story from this period. He'd become good friends with Jan Slabbert, the ex-Mayor of Vryheid and an Inkatha MP. In the early 2000s, without consultation, the IFP decided to recall him from parliament and install him as a legislator for the IFP in the KZN Legislative Assembly. Slabbert felt offended and Cronje tried to persuade him to join the ANC during what was called a "floor crossing window," that is, a period during which elected members of legislatures were allowed to switch parties without having to leave the legislature. Slabbert refused. He felt that it would be a dishonourable thing to do. So they cooked up a novel scheme that would allow Slabbert to stay in parliament: they created a new political party. It was called the Peace and Development Party. It used the NDM's constitution and allowed for dual membership. It had only two members: Jan Slabbert who was its leader and Pierre Cronje who was its General Secretary. Cronje, who was speechwriter for Slabbert, reports that Slabbert always became so enthusiastic when talking in the legislative assembly that he ran out of time and never delivered his conclusions. But his entry into parliament as the Peace and Development Party's sole representative gave the ANC the one vote that they needed for a majority in KwaZulu-Natal.

Cronje has largely retired from supervising large road contracts, thus having more time for his other passions of travel and restoring classic Alfa Romeos and pre-1958 Series One Land Rovers.

Peter Gastrow

Peter Gastrow resigned as the convenor of the Democratic Party's Interaction Committee on 29 July 1990, just two days before Malan left parliament:

> *"I hereby tender my resignation as Chairman (convenor) of the National Interaction Committee. My reason consists of a combination of a number of factors.*
>
> *"It is my view that, in the light of the dramatic changes which have occurred since 2 February, the entire thrust of the DP ought to be directed towards political interaction.* (But) *within the DP's overall political focus and priorities, it has received stepchild treatment."*

Gastrow then detailed the many ways in which the party had **ignored the Interaction Committee** since its inception in 1989. Unlike Malan, however, he decided to stay in parliament. When negotiations blew up because of distrust and violence in 1991, he helped to negotiate a National Peace Accord. The Accord evolved into a National Peace Committee of which he was the secretary. In 1994, the **United States Institute of Peace** (USIP) asked him

to write a book about the process. It was published by the USIP as Bargaining for Peace: South Africa and the National Peace Accord.

South Africans agreed to an interim constitution on 18 November 1993. It became law on the day of the first democratic election on 27 April 1994. Because the process had been so violent, the negotiators set up a structure to ensure safety and stability going into the election. Gastrow was its chair.

The ANC won the first election and the new Minister of Safety and Security, Sydney Mufamadi, asked Gastrow to be a special advisor with the aim of transforming the apartheid police force. He continued in this role until 1998 when he left to become the Cape Town director of an NGO called the **Institute for Security Studies**.

In 1999 the South African government asked Peter Gastrow to represent South Africa at the first meeting of a United Nations initiative to fight transnational organized crime. The problem for the world's law enforcement agencies was that there was no protocol through which they could cooperate when combating international criminal networks involved, for example, in money laundering, human trafficking, or the drug trade. He became the Rapporteur for the process and in November 2000, the UN General Assembly adopted the **United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime** (UNTOC). The Convention came into effect in September 2003 when 40 member countries ratified it. As of 2025, 194 countries have signed on to UNTOC, but Gastrow is critical of many of the world's biggest law enforcement agencies (United States, Russia, and China) because they support it in name only.

In 2009, the New York-based **International Peace Institute** asked Gastrow to join it as a Senior Fellow and Director of Programs in New York. While there, he led a series of "off-the-record" conferences with high-ranking global law enforcement officials and experts (retired heads of the FBI, Interpol, and the like). These seminars led to the creation of an NGO called the **Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime** (GI-TOC). It is based in Geneva. From 2013 until 2023 he served as a strategic advisor to the GI-TOC. Unlike UNTOC, the GI-TOC is not hampered by the political posturing of participating countries. As a result, it has become a world-renowned source of real-time data on transnational organized criminal activity; and a resource centre that's used by law enforcement agencies when they need to cooperate across borders. While UNTOC provides a treaty framework, it's the GI-TOC that's effectively driving international cooperation between nations.

Peter Gastrow retired in 2023. He is a Director Emeritus on the Africa Board of the GI-TOC.

Jan Hofmeyr (the writer)

By 1993, the Conversion Model had become an international marketing research business led by Butch Rice of Research Surveys. Hofmeyr had been out of political circulation for four years

when he and Research Surveys decided to pitch for the ANC's election research in 1993. His 1980s political research must have left an impression. While he was waiting to present his credentials to the ANC, the UDF/ANC activist and later co-founder of the Congress of the People, "Terror" Lekota, walked in and said "And which one are you?" Hofmeyr introduced himself. "Oh… you're Hofmeyr," said Lekota, "you're the one I've been told we should be looking for." And that was that. Hofmeyr won the contract.

For the first election Hofmeyr worked with Mark Orkin of Wits University and Stan Greenberg, a consultant from the United States who'd done the election research for Clinton. On the ANC side, he worked very closely with Tony Trew who'd been a member of the ANC's team for the Mbeki/Esterhuyse talks. He ended up running the ANC's election research from 1993 until he resigned the account in 2009. Orkin had dropped out in 1996 and Greenberg in 1999. For the first ten years the ANC used the Conversion Model. After 2005 it used a new method invented by Hofmeyr called Brand Value Creator.

Aside from the work that led to the ANC's first election slogan ("A better life for all" – see the Epilogue) Hofmeyr will tell you that the high-point of his work came in 2004. Against significant demographic odds, the ANC won enough seats in the Western Cape to become the government. But his ANC colleagues almost immediately blew up their own party by declaring political war on each other. That and bad government killed any chance that the ANC had of winning a second term in the Western Cape. The Western Cape has been governed by the Democratic Alliance since 2009. 2004 turned out to be the high-point of support for the ANC in the democratic era.

2009 was Hofmeyr's last election for the ANC. By that time, he'd become disillusioned with the party. Half way through the campaign, the government denied the Dalai Lama a visa to visit South Africa. For Hofmeyr it was the last straw. He phoned Tony Trew and told him that he could no longer work on the account. Trew said that he understood. The company with which Hofmeyr was working, Synovate/Ipsos, had a contract to fulfil and it would do so, but without Hofmeyr. Hofmeyr had always worked for the ANC pro bono. He was under no contractual obligation to continue.

He and his wife have retired to Victoria in British Columbia to be nearer their grandchildren who live all over the world. As an anti-colonialist he finds it marginally embarrassing to be living in a city called "Victoria."

Esther Lategan

Unlike Malan, Gastrow, and Cronje, Esther Lategan did not win election to parliament in 1989. Like her colleagues, she felt that de Klerk's speech had started the constitutional process that South Africa needed. There was therefore no reason for her to continue to be involved in party politics.

In 1991, Lategan became the Executive Director of one of South Africa's oldest non-profit organizations, the **National Institute for Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders** (NICRO). NICRO had been established in 1910 as the **South African Prisoners' Aid Association** to provide welfare support to prisoners and their families. Under Lategan's leadership, NICRO moved determinedly away from welfare towards prevention and rehabilitation, especially among younger offenders in disadvantaged communities.

In 1992, Lategan launched what are called **Diversion Programs**. These aim to keep young and first-time offenders out of the formal court system. They include:

- The **Youth Empowerment Scheme**: a life-skills program that focuses on the development of greater self-awareness and an understanding of how personal choices lead to criminal behaviour.
- **Pre-trial Community Service**: a classic alternative-to-prison program that offers young and first-time offenders community service instead of prison. Charges are dropped if offenders complete the program. They then have no criminal record.
- A program called **The Journey**: an intervention aimed at repeat offenders and high school dropouts. It combines vocational training with a wilderness adventure that teaches self-reliance.

When it comes to rehabilitation, NICRO's programs include:

- **Tough Enough**: puts offenders through a challenging process of self-discipline and preparation for civilian life prior to release if they commit to living a crime-free life.
- **Economic Opportunities Project**: a program that provides non-financial business support and training so that offenders can start small businesses.
- The NICRO **Creative Arts Awards**: a project that encourages prisoners to develop creative vocations like woodwork and leatherwork.

Lategan's programs have led to empirically measurable results: by 2002, research had proven that Diversion Programs had a recidivism record of less than 10% in the three years after the program. The programs have been so successful that they were written into law when South Africa passed the Child Justice Act in 2008.

In 1995, Lategan established the NICRO Study Fund for Prisoners. The fund makes money available to prisoners so that they can improve their formal education. It is based on well-known research that finds links between poor education and criminal recidivism. When Esther Lategan retired in 2000, the Study Fund was renamed the **Esther Lategan Study Fund** in her honour.

Wynand Malan

Wynand Malan left parliament in July 1990, just five months after de Klerk's speech. This is how he explained his decision in a press release on 11 July (translating from the Afrikaans):

"After more than twelve years in active party politics, I have decided to resign from my positions in Parliament and the Democratic Party at the end of July.

"The changed political circumstances for which I first campaigned within the NP, and since 1987 as an independent and then as leader of the NDM and co-leader of the Democratic Party, freed me to follow this path. ***What I worked for has come true.*** *South Africa is irreversibly on the way to a negotiated constitutional settlement."*

After indicating that he planned to return to a life as a normal working person and family man in Randburg, he assured people who might be feeling uneasy about the scale of change that all would be well. He thanked everyone with whom he'd been involved in politics and closed with good wishes for the people who would now be negotiating South Africa's future. "There are good negotiators and nation builders in all political groups," he said, "things will go well with South Africa and its people."

In an interview with Padraig O'Malley on the day before he announced his resignation (O'Malley archives, 10 July 1990), Malan criticized the Democratic Party for being caught flat-footed by de Klerk's speech:

"... the DP is suffering from its own success... they are clearly not anymore the party that is identified with negotiation... Secondly, insofar as (the DP) *placed itself on* (a platform of) *basic democratic values, de Klerk is fast taking control of that platform..."*

He said that the DP would have been relevant if it had put social democracy at its core, but it had failed to do so because it was essentially a party of the White business establishment. As a result, it was not well positioned to tackle the problems of inequality and poverty.

Malan stepped back into public life in 1995 when Nelson Mandela asked him to serve as one of the 17 commissioners on the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission**. The TRC's main purpose was to make an accurate record of gross human rights violations in South Africa from 1960 to 1994; and to attempt to understand their causes. It also offered the chance of amnesty for perpetrators and compensation for victims.

Under tremendous pressure because of the volume of testimony and limited time, the TRC rushed into a final report without giving commissioners a chance to read and debate its findings. For this reason, Malan endorsed the establishment of the commission but not its findings. He wrote a minority report which the TRC included in Vol. 5 of its final report. In his report, Malan noted that he did not wish to question the integrity of his fellow commissioners by writing a minority report. He thanked the TRC's research staff and paid tribute to Bishop Tutu, its chair. Then he highlighted what he considered to be the TRC's shortcomings.

First, as he pointed out, the TRC's purpose was not to act as a court of law, but to create a testimonial account of what had happened by giving people a chance to tell their stories. **One cannot overstate the value of that purpose**. For Malan, one of the greatest outcomes of the process had been to see how people who'd been tortured or beaten or had their loved ones killed, had **reclaimed their dignity and humanity by telling their stories**.

But there were flaws in the paradigm: precisely because the TRC's purpose was not to test people's testimony in a legal way, it should not have been treated as a forum that would expose a legalistic form of truth. But it was. It was then used as a forum for judgment that went beyond what the very personalized testimonies should have allowed. It had also been incomplete in failing to recognize, for example, that some people had been both victim and perpetrator. People might talk about the abuse they'd suffered at the hands of the security forces, but fail to testify to the abuses they had inflicted on others such as necklacing.

And so, as someone who had always been unblinking in his confrontations with history, Malan's main criticism had to do with questions of causes and the question of truth. South Africa's story was essentially a human story about how people from different backgrounds with different value systems had interacted with each other in sometimes appalling ways. By failing to recognize that this story had occurred often in history, the TRC had failed to examine the difficult but incredibly important question: how does it happen? Instead, the TRC had lapsed into a simplistic religious language of "good" and "evil" and of judgment, retribution, and redemption. By doing so, it had produced a superficial analysis that failed to answer the more difficult but important question of why human tribes can treat each other so badly.

Malan's report included the following recommendation: South Africa should commission academic research into how the value system conflicts of its people had led almost inevitably to gross human rights violations. By not pushing through to a deeper truth, the TRC had missed a chance to make a contribution to humanity's understanding of its inhumanity. Malan's minority report ends with two memorable sentences about his appointment: "It is an honour and a privilege. It is not often a pleasure."

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Sources

Many documents and press clippings are in my and Peter Gastrow's personal archives (see list below). If you're looking for anything in particular, contact me at Hofmeyr1953@gmail.com.

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1990: 8 March, Recommended Democratic Party strategy "Towards Democracy." This document notes that Van Zyl Slabbert, in his capacity as Strategic Advisor, was canvassed by the chairperson.

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